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ABSTRACT

The report summarizes research collected in the Portland State University Transition Project which researched the impact of job-club-type training upon the school-to-work transition outcomes for mildly handicapped high school students. The project also examined reuse of job search skills in the search for leisure opportunities. The project identified an appropriate instructional workbook and developed a comprehensive research instrument to collect data. Findings indicated that students in the intervention classes found employment at the 81% rate compared to a 58% employment rate for students in the control group. In all areas compared, students receiving the intervention did better than similar students in the control group. After an introduction, the first section provides background to the intervention and research strategies including the work and leisure search intervention and the curriculum search. The next section reports on activities concerning measures of successful transition in discussions of the challenge of measuring leisure and the multifaceted nature of transition. A profile of all the students in the study is offered next, following which the effects of training are reported for two aspects of the job search: (1) job search competencies during training and (2) job search behavior after training. The final two sections provide evaluation data on employment outcomes and satisfaction with the intervention. Twenty-two tables present the Project's statistical data. (DB)

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# *Numbers That Spell Success*

## Transitions to Work and Leisure Roles for mildly handicapped youth

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***Martin Kimeldorf and Jean Edwards***

EC 212110

# *Numbers That Spell Success*

*Report of the Portland State University*
*School-to-Work Transition Research Project*
*Emphasizing Transitions To Work And Leisure Roles*

*National Research Project*
*funded in part by a 3 year*
*OSERS Research Grant 1985-1988*
*and contributions from The PSU Foundation*

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*Project Director*

*Martin Kimeldorf*
*Project Coordinator*

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*Research Assistant*

*Numbers That Spell Success*

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# *Dedication*

*All of my life, I have been fascinated by the skills we use in work and leisure. In the early 1970s I began thinking about the connection between technology and art and became an Industrial Arts teacher. In the early 1980s I began advocating job search education in the schools as preparation for the future. The school-to-work transition project was a wonderful way to culminate a lifelong interest in work and leisure opportunities. The project turned my work into a playful and meaningful experience. I therefore dedicate this manuscript to the many wonderful teachers, administrators, students, and staff who made this synergistic project possible.*

*This report is dedicated to the teachers, students and support staff participating in the project operated through the Special Studies Department at Portland State University. This dedication includes the PSU graduate students in the transition project, faculty, and secretaries. I also dedicate this report to the efforts of the teachers, students and administrators in both special and alternative education from the following Oregon school districts: Portland, Parkrose, Lake Oswego , Centennial, and The Tree of Learning (Private Alternative School) and Vancouver and Camas, Washington school districts.*

*I want to especially thank Jean Edwards for spending the enormous time required in the beginning to write the grant and the support she later gave as director of the project. As always her ideas and support helped to make our goal a reality.*

*Martin Kimeldorf*

# PREFACE

It is April, 1988 as I write; the U.S. will no doubt experience one of those horrible recessions within the next few years, perhaps the worst one since 1939. Certainly Black Monday gave us the inkling that it could happen again and soon. With more and more jobs going overseas, and the immigration of many foreign laborers, mildly handicapped youth face a very uncertain vocational future.

Collectively, Martin Kimeldorf and I have talked endlessly to job search specialists, agency counselors, career experts, handicapped employment specialists, job coaches and the like seeking their trade secrets as well as having held many of these employment positions ourselves in seeking to help youth transition from school to work. These values of empowering mildly handicapped youth to do their own self-directed search have been field tested and been a part of our own personal philosophies for some time.

So this funded research grant was an attempt to empirically validate what we and other advocates have practiced for some years. We hope to convince classroom teachers, administrators, supported employment specialists, workshop personnel, CETA workers, job development specialists, etc. of the critical need to teach reuseable job search skills (life skills) that can be used over and over again as youth encounter the need to change jobs, seek housing, locate recreation, make new friends, or get themselves out of trouble when trouble comes to them. It is our belief that these same skills are reuseable and should be the basics of American education if we are to take our president seriously when he said: "It is the right of every American child to leave the public high school equipped for entry employment, independent living and the ability to make responsible life choices."

The ideas presented here are not new or limited to mildly handicapped youth. They have been used successfully by job seekers of all ages and background. In fact, Martin and I have used these techniques many times personally as we have sought to empower ourselves to upgrade our working conditions, gain additional pay, change employment, seek better housing, make new friends, and become a part of our new neighborhood or a new professional group.

The additional effort and dedication which prompted this research came from the sad statistics of soaring drop-out rates of at-risk and mildly handicapped youth, the underemployment of special education graduates, and the sadness in seeing former students living in substandard housing, with few friends and little hope from agency personnel.

These are the things that gave meaning to our fund-raising efforts, research design, and political appeals to seek curriculum changes in the midst of the "BACK TO THE BASICS" movement and continue to make us believe that we can make changes in the lives of youth without massive changes in the system.

This book is written in plain English. The statistical jargon has been minimized because we want this book to reach parents, teachers, professionals, counselors and political decision makers. It is spiced with research data to convince the skeptics, but it is really a testimony to the unlimited wellspring of spirit and enthusiasm of MARTIN KIMELDORF who knows how to spell SUCCESS!

I salute him for his tireless efforts, his values and commitment to Real Education, and for all the joy he has brought to me in working with him.

Jean Edwards

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# TRANSITION PROJECT
# DATA SUMMARY
# 1985-1988

## INTRODUCTION

This is a summary of the research data collected in the PSU School-To-Work Transition Project. The mission of the project was to research the impact of job-club-type training upon the school-to-work transition outcomes for mildly handicapped high school students. In addition, we explored the possible reuse of job search skills in the search for leisure opportunities. To fulfill these goals five high school sites participated in the new training program. Each semester teachers paired up with graduate students from Portland State University to team teach new and existing curriculums that emphasized self-directed job finding. In the third year one-fifth of our project sites had also experimented with the new concept of a self-directed leisure search. Sites were chosen to represent rural, suburban, and inner city programs with the majority of sites located in the Portland Public School system. During a typical semester there were usually three sites in an inner city school, one in a suburban school, and one in a rural or small town setting.

To reach the project goals, two types of materials were required. The first item involved instructional classroom materials which would serve as the core of the job and leisure search intervention. The second item required was an instrument for defining and measuring transition success. The project began with a single workbook and the development of a comprehensive research instrument used to collect the data. This instrument guided the research efforts. These efforts involved comparing students' background, parent expectations, and training outcomes. This instrument catalogued over 300 possible variables for each student. Approximately 80 variables yielded useful insights.

The results are generally reported for two broad groups labelled as *intervention* and *control* groups respectively. Students enrolled in the job and/or leisure classes composed the *intervention* group and were compared to a *control* group receiving only the typical program available in their school building. The methods used to gather data involved collecting detailed background information from student files, conducting phone surveys with guardians, testing students' job

search competencies, surveying students and teachers about their satisfaction with the training, and follow-up of employment outcomes.

The single most important outcome was the percentage of student employment. Students in the control group found jobs at the 58% employment rate. Those in the intervention classes found employment at the 81% employment rate. In all of the areas compared, the students receiving the intervention did better than similar students in a control group. Simply stated, after three years the research supports the hypothesis that a job search education (and related training in leisure) can make a difference in employment and should be seriously considered by all special educators.[1] The details of employment outcomes, parent expectations, student job search competence, and satisfaction with the training by students, guardians, and teachers are the subject of this report.

## BACKGROUND TO INTERVENTION AND RESEARCH STRATEGIES

The initial intervention strategy was quite simple—put a job search class in each project classroom site and use a curriculum patterned after the successful job club models of the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the intervention design an overriding concern was placed upon the*usefulness* or *practicality* of the intervention which would later influence its ease of replication. It was important to develop an intervention that could be easily fitted into *existing* school climates and semester programs. The staff initially encountered enthusiasm from teachers as well as hurdles reflected in the current school emphasis on back-to-basics.

It appears that the current climate is heavily centered on academics and graduation requirements. As a result, it was initially difficult to identify students who had the freedom to take an employment preparation class. The difficulty was compounded because a similar group of control students needed to be identified. Generally, control group students were selected on the basis of being eligible for the the job search class at a future date. The encouraging news came in the form of teacher support. Teachers often expressed the belief that job search training was critically needed by their students.

An essential consideration at all times was the fact that busy high school teachers wanted something "off the shelf" and ready to teach—a workbook. Anything more complicated than this

[1] Regular-vocational and alternative education people may also wish to consider the implications of this report because the employment rate of the students receiving a job search education also exceeded the rate of employment of their non-handicapped peers. This conclusion is based on a large study at the University of Washington showing that mildly handicapped students typically achieved a 63% employment rate after graduation as compared to a non-handicapped peer rate of 73%.

would have caused problems. The enthusiasm of the teachers for the project was heightened when they realized that the intervention would involve a simple curricular change based on an easy-to-follow workbook. The workbook chosen fit into the existing semester-long instructional blocks. And as such, our concern for a useful, easy-to-replicate intervention was achieved.

**The Work and Leisure Search Intervention**

The primary hypothesis tested would read, "Students receiving a job search education will achieve higher levels of employment and demonstrate greater job search competence." A second concern covered the transition to another adult role: the positive use of leisure time. Therefore, a second hypothesis followed the first: "Students who reuse their job search skills to find leisure opportunities will deepen their self-directed job search skills and learn how to apply them to other areas. In the process they will improve their awareness of leisure opportunities". The linkage between work and leisure has been discussed a great deal in the past and is being reborn again today. Our attention was ***not directed at the definition of work and leisure but the search for both.*** Our conceptual framework suggested that job search skills are really problem solving and information gathering skills. Thus, students who master a generic set of search skills can apply these skills to other important areas like the search for transportation, housing, medical services, etc.

However, this project was only concerned with the specific and common set of problem solving skills related to the search for work and leisure. For example, a student enters a leisure class and identifies an interest in jewelry making. This initial leisure interest might later be carried over into the job search class and related to occupational interests in the field of dental technology (or other occupations requiring fine motor coordination). In both the work and leisure class the student must gather new or additional information about his or her interest area. The student learns how to search for information in printed material, but the real thrust of the research emphasizes networking to find local experts (jewelers or dental lab employers). After finding an expert, the student digs deeper by meeting with the expert and conducting an informational interview. During this process, the student learns how to make appointments, how to use the yellow pages, and finally how to plan an appropriate appearance for an interview.

**The Curriculum Search**

Theories, hypotheses and concepts must then find practical ways of being implemented. The first practical question was, "What books or curriculum guides will we use?" Initially, the curriculums covering self-directed work and leisure searches proved very few in number. The criteria for the

ideal curriculums required instruction emphasizing direct instruction, cooperative or small group activities, hands on experiences like role-playing or the use of real life forms, and concluding with actual demonstrations of the skills in the community. The instructional sequence needed to include many different kinds of topics such as phoning skills, making informational interviews, using self-assessment inventories, writing resumes , getting letters of reference, writing thank-you letters, completing job applications, comprehensive interview practice, networking techniques, practicing techniques to develop leads, and developing procedures to stay organized and accountable during the search for work or leisure.

In August of 1985 the only book meeting this criteria was *Job Search Education* written by the project coordinator. Later investigation found only one other book with similar content and sequence, *The Work Book* by Farr, et. al. However, the reading level was too high. Today in 1988 there are many more curriculums available, each pegged at different program needs. In the second year of the project newer works were identified which helped bridge the gap between academic and vocational subjects. For example a resume writing program combined an intensive writing-as-process sequence with resume production and job search skills. Additional materials have been identified for junior high school age students.

However, when it came time to identify a book integrating the work and leisure searches, the curriculum cupboard was bare. In leisure education there were many books *about* leisure. In fact, one of the PSU project advisors Dr. Brannan has produced curriculum guides showing how leisure can be infused into existing subjects.[2] Other materials gave general help in the form of generic leisure resource lists . Many instruments existed to help people identify their leisure interests. But no books were found with a high school orientation and a focus was upon searching for new leisure opportunities using the proven techniques of job finding.[3]

**Putting A Team On The Field**

The project also provided a unique instructional opportunity involving team teaching. The classroom team combined an experienced teacher with a graduate student in Special Education at Portland State University. Five graduate students in Special Education received a scholarship in exchange for 10 hours of work per week in the transition project. The graduate student attended training events related to the curriculum. As a result, the graduate student became a valuable link in the transmission of the new curriculums. The classroom master teacher team

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[2] The book by Brannan, written specifically for special educators, is listed in the annotated bibliography at the end.
[3] Richard Bolles's work *The Three Boxes of Life* covered the search for work, education, and leisure opportunities but it is quite long and not suitable for our target audiences. It remains a highly recommended reference.

taught with the graduate student three days a week and continued the program on his/her own the remaining two days. In this fashion, the graduate student completed practicums and student teaching experiences while teaching an entire year in project classrooms. Everyone expressed satisfaction with this cooperative model and claimed to have benefitted from this approach. In addition to the hours spent teaching, the graduate students were involved collecting the research data for their remaining project hours.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

At first glance, it appears that measuring transition success is a simple matter of reporting employment rates. However, this task becomes complicated when measuring people finishing their education when school is of equal or greater importance to job finding. It is further complicated when leisure education is introduced. The process of developing a fair way to measure the success of job (and leisure) search training is the subject of this section.

The first step in designing an instrument to measure transition success was a review of transition literature covering the mildly handicapped (which was sparse). This was followed by creating an inventory of the known factors in job finding success. Lastly, the dimensions of leisure satisfaction were reviewed. One of the best studies on transition (precisely highlighting the efforts of the mildly handicapped) was found in the neighboring state at the University of Seattle, conducted by Edgar and Levine. Many of their follow-up procedures for collecting data on employment were adapted to the project's purpose. Since the Portland State Project dealt with a much smaller data base our project was able to conduct a more intensive investigation into transition behaviors, backgrounds and outcomes.

Additionally, the statewide research and advocacy for transition preparation by Andy Halpern at the University of Oregon in Eugene and supported by the Oregon Department of Education helped lay the groundwork for our efforts. Halpern also pushed forward the notion that transition success should not be limited to employment success. This argument helped raise awareness for the importance of training not only for employment transition but also other areas such as leisure.

All of these inventories, studies and reviews came together in a procedure manual called *Measures Of Successful Transition* or *M.O.S.T.* The *M.O.S.T.* document would serve as a guide to collecting and recording data for the control and intervention groups. A first draft of the *M.O.S.T.* procedure manual was submitted nationally to experts in the field of school-to-work transition who were identified in various journal articles. Their input and encouragement resulted

in a revised draft in Winter of 1986 which was next disseminated locally to work experience coordinators, teachers, and job search experts. A final draft was field tested in the Spring of 1986 and revised that summer.

The data collection process began with a review of the student's files. Information was collected on factors that could potentially influence employment like attendance, the number of vocational IEPs, handicapping condition, the time spent in special education, vocational and leisure classes, and reasons for taking the job search course. This was followed up with a phone call home to collect data about the guardian's involvement in the student's job search and the guardian's expectations for students' employment and independent living.

As the high school students completed their training in the job search instruction, they were given a two day situational assessment of their job search skills. This involved a rigorous, highly structured, graded assessment in four areas shown to be critical to job search success. The most intensive test consisted of a mock interview by an outside person (role-playing an employer). Each interview question was graded. The students also had an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to develop two important lists for potential job leads. The first was a list of personal network contacts and the second was a list of possible local employers found in a phone book. Finally students were given a mock job application which was graded with a criteria-referenced inventory for errors like using a pencil, illegible handwriting, spelling errors, not following directions, uncompleted answers etc.[4] The job search competence test was also administered to the control group of students.

Finally, in the summer of 1987, students' households were contacted to determine the student's employment status, the methods used to find jobs, and satisfaction with the instruction. In the first year it was very difficult to motivate the control group to participate in testing and follow-up. The staff reasoned that this was the result of limited personal contact with the control group as compared to the intervention group. Therefore, a new strategy was tried where the control group of students were contacted in June, before school was out, in the hope that the students would be easier to contact. This strategy did not prove to be that useful but it did reveal some interesting insights into the collection of employment data for in-school youth.

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[4] Job applicants often overlook the importance of even the smallest job application error. One typical executive pointed out that 80% of applications he receives are messy, incomplete, completed incorrectly or ignored directions. (Farr.1988). Therefore, with a little training job search students can begin to stand out early in the labor market.

The initial follow-up data collected from the control group was disappointing with only 15 people successfully contacted for a 25% rate of return. Those contacted reported a very low employment rate of 20%. At the end of summer a second follow-up of the control group was attempted in September. This time the rate of return was improved to 31% and the employment rate appeared more normal at 58%. This was accepted as the final employment rate even though the period of reporting occurred about two-to-three months later than the survey of the intervention group. It also comes remarkably close to the University of Washington study cited earlier. They found that the general employment rate for Learning Disabled students who had graduated was 63%.[5] This valuable lesson suggests that measuring employment among school age youth is best done at the end of a summer period when students' job search efforts are least fettered by school obligations.

**The Challenge Of Measuring Leisure**

Measuring leisure success is even more challenging. There is no black and white outcome for leisure. A review of the literature revealed that there is a similarity between work and leisure satisfaction. Several national studies indicate that only about 50% of people surveyed claim they enjoy their leisure. However, defining successful leisure is fraught with ambiguity. As an alternative, a measure based on Forrest McDowell's notion of *leisure wellness* was developed.[6] Leisure wellness does not concern itself with what leisure is or isn't. Instead the goal of leisure wellness is similar to medical wellness. Leisure wellness is defined as that status where one leisure becomes actively involved in designing one's leisure lifestyle, and therefore accountable for the quality of one's leisure.[7]

The notion of leisure wellness is consistent with other leisure education principles wherein leisure is defined not in terms of activities but rather in terms of attitudes. For example, gardening can become a chore, a job, or a leisure pastime depending upon one's attitude. If a person is paid and enjoys the gardening as well, then work and leisure begin to blend together. A leisure attitude survey was developed to inventory three areas of awareness. This included the awareness of how one uses resources in leisure (time, money, transportation). The second area inventoried the student's knowledge of or interest in diverse leisure activities. The third test involved measuring specific leisure attitudes reflecting values, use of time, self-concept, relation

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[5] It should be pointed out that the Seattle labor market traditionally reports a lower unemployment figure than the Portland area.

[6] See the book *Leisure Wellness* by Dr. Forrest McDowell.

[7] This philosophy is similar to the notion of self-directed job searches where a person is accountable for their job search behavior. As job search behavior increases, employment appears to happen sooner according to Azrin and others.

to others, and satisfaction. The leisure test was given to over 80 students never enrolled in the leisure search class and this constituted the baseline or norm. Then, in the Spring of 1986 the test was administered to a small class of 8 students who had completed both the leisure and job search training.

The results for leisure success can probably never be conclusive. Since leisure remains a philosophically defined entity, it is best that the interpretation of results remains open to debate. Also, the low number of students initially completing the job and leisure search class in 1987 prevents one from drawing definitive conclusions. It may bear noting in postscript that Dewey considered leisure to be a major domain in education, yet leisure education has remained largely ignored by educational reformers and thinkers.[8]

**Transition Is Multifaceted**

The PSU project attempted the challenging task of measuring the complex process of transition. The concept used a multi-faceted definition of transition success and resulted in measuring simultaneously several different domains: employment, competence, and the relevance of work and leisure search training. It is our belief that employment cannot become the only measure of success, particularly for students still finishing school, wherein school studies and home responsibilities compete with the labor market for the attention of students and their families. At the same time, there is no other school subject currently evaluated on the basis of employment outcome. Likewise, schools do not justify math or sex education on the premise that the skills must be used right after training. We recognize that much of what is taught in school helps the individual to grow and the subsequent knowledge will be useful in the future. The same principle ought to apply to job search training. This is why it is important to measure different outcomes from job search competence to course satisfaction.

**REPORTING**

This paper will report the findings under four general headings describing: (l) The Student Profile, (2) The Effects of Training, (3) Employment Outcomes, and (4) The Work-Leisure Connection. Within each of the four areas the methods used and the data collected are discussed first, followed by an analysis of the findings. Where applicable the findings of our research will be compared to other research found at-large not only in the transition movement but in the much larger studies conducted about job finding and leisure.

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[8] In 1918 Dewey and others considered leisure to be one of the Seven Cardinal Principles of Education. (McDaniels, 1984).

**Note About Intervention Groupings and Reporting**

The intervention group can be sub-divided into two groups: those taking 18 weeks of job search training, known as the ***J group***, and those completing 9 weeks of training in leisure and work search respectively, known as the ***L and J group***. Generally the job search competence of the mixed *L and J group* was lower than those completing 18 weeks of job finding. However, in a few areas the *L and J group* scored higher, as in the networking. Networking was a major component of the leisure search training program.

## THE STUDENT PROFILE

Each semester five project classrooms offered the intervention instruction to classes with 8-12 students enrolled. Three-fifths of the project participants were concentrated in an urban area, while other sites outside of Portland were involved in both suburban and rural school districts. The total students tracked in the 1987 study was 160. The total number of students involved in the control and intervention groups are indicated in Table 1. Over the course of three years our project involved about 250 subjects.

| TOTAL NUMBER IN THE DATA BASE FOR 1986-87, N = 140 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Control Group, N = 60**<br>Representing students taking typical high school classes. | | **Intervention Group, N = 80**<br>*All* students receiving some form of job search training. | |
| **C1**-Through June<br>Total for both semesters in 86-87.<br>N = 60 | **C2**- In September<br>Only 2nd semester students were sampled in this follow-up, 19 responded to the survey. | **J**-Job Search for one semester<br>N = 60 | **L & J**-Leisure *and* Job Search for one semester<br>N = 20 |

*Table 1*

Most of the background data collected about students simply look at intervention versus control groups. Table 1 shows that each intervention and control group can be broken down into two subgroups for reporting purposes. When outcomes are measured for competence and employment it was often useful to compare the results between the subgroups (particularly in the intervention group). On the intervention side, the performance of students in the pure job search course lasting one semester (18 weeks) was compared with those students who received a leisure search program for 9 weeks and a job search education for 9 weeks. The first sub-group is labelled as *J* and the second sub-group is referred to as *L & J*. On the control side, all of the background data and statistical analysis reflects the data collected across a control group taken from two semesters and labelled as the *C1* control group. The final employment statistics are taken from the a second employment follow-up of only second semester control students labelled as *C2*.[9]

Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5 summarize the background of all the students involved in the project study. Unlike sub-grouping, these charts aggregate all of the students together because of the great

[9] The students in C2 were not subjected to the same detailed statistical analysis as C1 because the data for C2 was collected after the computer data base was established.

similarity between the control and intervention groups. A statistical analysis comparing the intervention to the control groups reveals no significance between them. Therefore, in the interest of simplicity, a composite profile of all the students in the study is presented in Tables 2, 3, 4, 5.

| AGE, GENDER, RACE, ATTENDANCE BACKGROUND | |
|---|---|
| GENDER | Male..... 60%<br>Female..... 40% |
| YEAR IN SCHOOL (GRADE) | 10th..... 25%<br>11th..... 36<br>12th..... 33 |
| RACE | Caucasian ..... 60 %<br>Black..... 25% |
| ATTENDANCE:<br>NUMBER OF DAYS MISSED<br>IN PREVIOUS YEAR. | 1-10 Days ..... 50%<br>11-23..... 47<br>23+ days ..... 16% |

*Table 2*

| SPECIAL EDUCATION STATUS | | |
|---|---|---|
| PERIODS IN<br>SPECIAL EDUCATION<br>(Separate groupings due<br>do significant differences)* | Control Group*<br>1 Period ..... 55%<br>2-3..... 27% | Intervention Group*<br>1.....38%<br>2-3.....46% |
| HANDICAPPING<br>CONDITION | Learning Disabled ..... 82%<br>Mentally Retarded or Behaviorally Disordered ..... 15% | |

*Table 3*

| VOCATIONAL PLANNING AND PREPARATION | |
|---|---|
| NUMBER OF IEP VOCATIONAL GOALS | 0 (none) goals..... 60% |
| ENROLLED IN REGULAR VOCATIONAL CLASSES | 0 (none) classes ..... 28%<br>1-2 classes ..... 35% |
| INVOLVED IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES | 0 (none) Activities reported..... 60% |
| WORK EXPERIENCE | PREVIOUS Employment *In* Their Neighborhood .....73%<br>PREVIOUS Employment *outside* The Neighborhood..... 50%<br>CURRENTLY Employed .....14% |
| REASON FOR TAKING THE JOB SEARCH CLASS | To learn more about job finding..... 70%<br>Need a career education credit ..... 15% |

*Table 4*

| PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS | |
|---|---|
| Expected student to be employed after graduation: | Full-time..... 50%<br>Part-time..... 24%<br>Unsure ..... 24% |
| Expected student to be employed within: | 1-6 months..... 50%<br>Unsure ..... 50% |
| Expect student to be living on his/her own within: | 1-6 months..... 13%<br>Unsure ..... 53% |

*Table 5*

**Significance Of Background**

The question next asked was, "Do any of these variables correlate significantly with employment?" All of the student data was then regrouped into two categories—employed and unemployed. In this way, those background factors effecting with employment could be isolated without regard to membership in either the intervention or control group. This would show if

there were other variables that might have affected employment . The following variables were found **not** to be correlated in a statistically significant fashion with employment:

GENDER
YEAR IN SCHOOL
HAVING A PREVIOUS COMPETITIVE JOB OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBORHOOD
ENROLLMENT IN REGULAR OR SPECIAL VOCATIONAL CLASSES

One background variable showed a borderline significance with employment. This factor was previous employment in the neighborhood and is referred to as *casual labor*. This form of labor involves neighborhood jobs like lawn mowing and babysitting. Those students with casual labor experience showed a borderline, statistically significant positive correlation with employment.

One variable proved to be significantly correlated with employment: previous school attendance. The total number or days missed in school were tabulated and correlated to final employment outcomes. As students missed fewer days they were more likely to end up in the employed group as illustrated in Table 6. For example, 73% of the employed students missed 1-10 days with only 7 % missing 23 days or more. In the unemployed group 25% of the students missed 23 days or more!

| ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYMENT CORRELATION | | |
|---|---|---|
| Days Missed | Unemployed | Employed |
| 1-10 days | 57% | 73% |
| 23 days or more | 25% | 7 % |

*Table 6*

## INTERPRETATION OF STUDENT PROFILE

Many of the background findings reveal a fairly typical group of students were being served. However, several of the background findings surprised the staff. The first surprise came from the attendance statistics in Table 2. Combining the two most negative attendance categories shows that 63% of the students missed more than one day per month. It is alarming that almost 16% of the students missed 23 days of school. Another cause for concern is found in Table 4 concerning vocational planning and preparation. In 1988 it is surprising to find that 60% of the students had no vocational IEP goals. With 35% of the students completing 1-2 vocational classes and 28% without any vocational class experience there is still room for improvement in the area of enrollment in mainstream vocational classes.

*Table 6 "Attendance and Employment Correlation" illustrated as a chart*

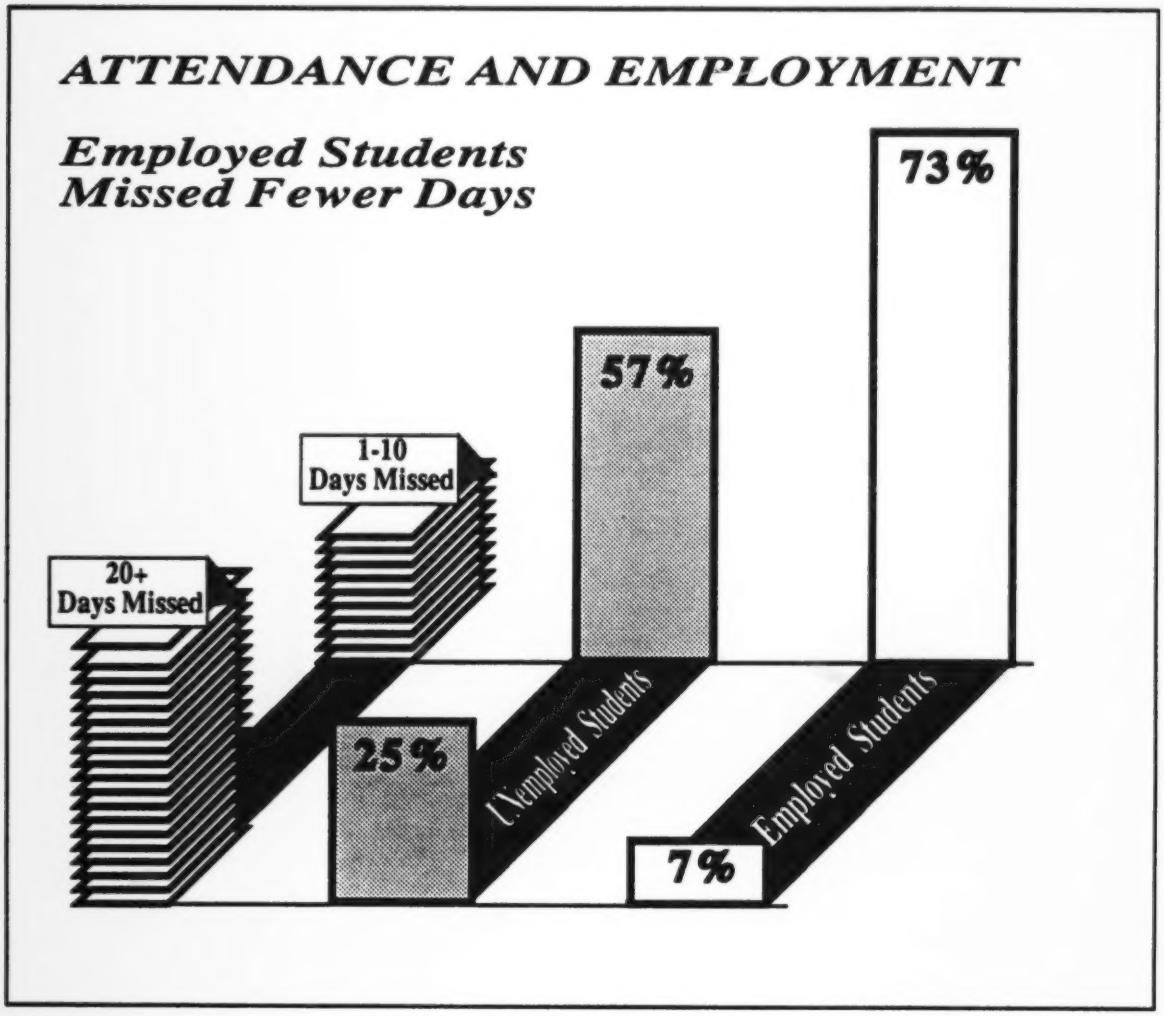


Table 2 data also shows how little the students are involved in extracurricular activities. Finally, in Table 5 displaying parents' expectations, only about half of the parents surveyed expected the student to become employed full-time and only 13% expected the student would move out and live on his or her own. There seems to be a large number of "unsure" parents. This should be discussed in light of the newly emerging social phenomenon called "crowded nest syndrome". More and more parents are experiencing young adults returning to the nest after graduation, divorce, or after losing a job. One explanation offered is that minimum wage jobs no longer offers a living wage. When two incomes are needed to run a household, many young adults may come to feel that they cannot live independently or successfully on their own. Another interpretation suggests that many offspring have simply come to the conclusion that they have no chance of establishing a lifestyle similar to their parents. They give up and return to the nest.

Two other global observations stand out. First of all, gender, previous work experience, and vocational training did not seem to correlate significantly with employment. In fact 14% of the students who voluntarily enrolled in the job search classes already had jobs! This should not be taken to mean that factors like vocational training and work experience are unimportant. However, it should be a clear indicator that the training and preparation for work focus on the skills in performing a task. But performing a task and finding a job are two different sets of skills. Having work skills is no guarantee of getting a job. In today's competitive labor market, students receive only half the preparation needed when they get a vocational training program that lacks a serious job search component. Like any complex skill, the art of finding work requires the same commitment and diligence afforded the subjects of math or English. In the author's opinion, job search programs will not yield maximum results until schools treat job finding programs seriously and demonstrate this by providing stand alone, semester-long courses.

The issue of program design and the role of job placement is worthy of consideration. When students are placed on a job by a work coordinator, the question must be asked, "How does this placement prepare a students for independence?"[10] Pre-vocational placements early in a students schooling help the student explore interests while acquiring skills. However, when placement becomes the culminating feature of a transition program, then the practice must be questioned. Many people can find their own entry level job because low paid, low skill jobs are so often plentiful. However, finding a job haphazardly in a "buyers market" does not imply that one knows or can exercise competitive job finding skills that will lead to better job opportunities in

[10] This question assumes that the students being discussed have the potential to be trained to find their own jobs.

the future. Ask why the employed students enrolled in the job search classes. Perhaps they were not sure how to go about getting their next job, or a better job.

Why wasn't gender an issue? There seems to be no clear answer. However, it should be pointed out that the the majority of employed individuals came from the intervention group. The first control group (C1) reported only a 20% employment rate in June. Therefore, analysis of employment statistics tends to reflect more heavily those students participating in the intervention group. As such, one could speculate that when job search training is provided the difference in employment rates tended to even out between genders.

## THE EFFECTS OF TRAINING

The training effect was measured in two ways. First, successful job search behaviors were identified from numerous studies of labor market functions. These behaviors were isolated and guided the development of a job search competence test battery. The battery tested job search competence of students while still in school. But what happens when the student goes out on his or her own to look for work? A follow-up survey of students' households was conducted in June, July and September. The survey attempted to inventory the specific job search behaviors reportedly being used most often by successful or active job seekers. (Successful means employed and active means still looking). Thus, data was collected on students' job search competence both during training (in school) and after training (outside of the school setting). These findings are presented in two parts.

### *PART I—JOB SEARCH COMPETENCIES DURING TRAINING*

Successful job hunters are good performers. An old job search adage states, "jobs do not go to the best qualified candidate, they go to the best performing job seeker". Because job search behavior is performance oriented, paper and pencil testing is a poor measure of competence. Therefore, the competency test used a model adapted from situational vocational assessment.

Students were asked to perform or demonstrate actual job search behaviors. Then the performance was evaluated using criterion-referenced scales and inventories. For example, the job application section had 15 possible errors to be scored such as misspellings, grammar, incompleteness, handwriting, appropriateness of response, and following directions. To achieve a degree of objectivity in the job interview, people outside the classroom were asked to come in and evaluate each student's interview performance. In the interview each employer was given a set of questions to choose from, representing eight different phases of the interview. Then the student was scored in each of the eight different interview phases. Employers use a forced-choice rating to avoid too many "average" ratings. Using a forced choice scale, employers were asked to indicate degrees of competence or incompetence. Low scores were in the 1 and 2 ratings and high scores were in the 3 and 4 rating. Routine job search competencies like completing a job application, networking, and developing job leads from phone books were also evaluated using realistic test materials and criteria-referenced scoring procedures.

In all of these tests students who received a job search (and leisure search) education did far better than their peers. The statistical analysis found that the difference in the scores between the

control and intervention groups were statistically significant in almost all test areas. Each of these areas will be discussed next.

**Job Application, Networking, Phone Book Competence**

The beginning stages of a job search hinge upon the job seekers ability to development leads. A lead is not necessarily an opening, but information where a potential opening might exist. Leads take shape as names of people or places. The middle stage involves following-up on leads and trying to get past certain general screenings devices, like job applications. The final stage involves effectively interviewing and coping with rejection. The students involved in the intervention scored higher in three critical areas: networking, using the phone book to develop leads, and completing job applications. The results of testing are summarized in Table 7.

| JOB APPLICATION, NETWORKING, & PHONE BOOK COMPETENCIES | | |
|---|---|---|
| COMPETENCIES | CONTROL GROUP | INTERVENTION GROUP |
| JOB APPLICATION<br>Making 8 errors or more | 100. 0 % | 62.7 % |
| NETWORKING<br>Able to identify 9 people or more | 21.9 % | 60.4 % |
| PHONE BOOK USAGE<br>Scoring 3 or more points | 21.9 % | 56.0 % |
| *Table 7* | | |

In Table 7 the control group obtains a higher score under job applications. (Note that the job application statistics are negative indicators about making a large number of errors. A lower percentage in this category is desired). For both the control and intervention group it appears that job applications continue to present problems—neither produced error free applications. Perhaps students with special learning needs will always be challenged by the writing and reading tasks associated with a job application. Zero errors may remain a goal, but zero errors may be unattainable without help. The good news is that students often get help at home. Parents were asked during the initial phone survey to list the ways they most often help the students. Table 8 lists the order in which parents most frequently became involved in the student's job search.





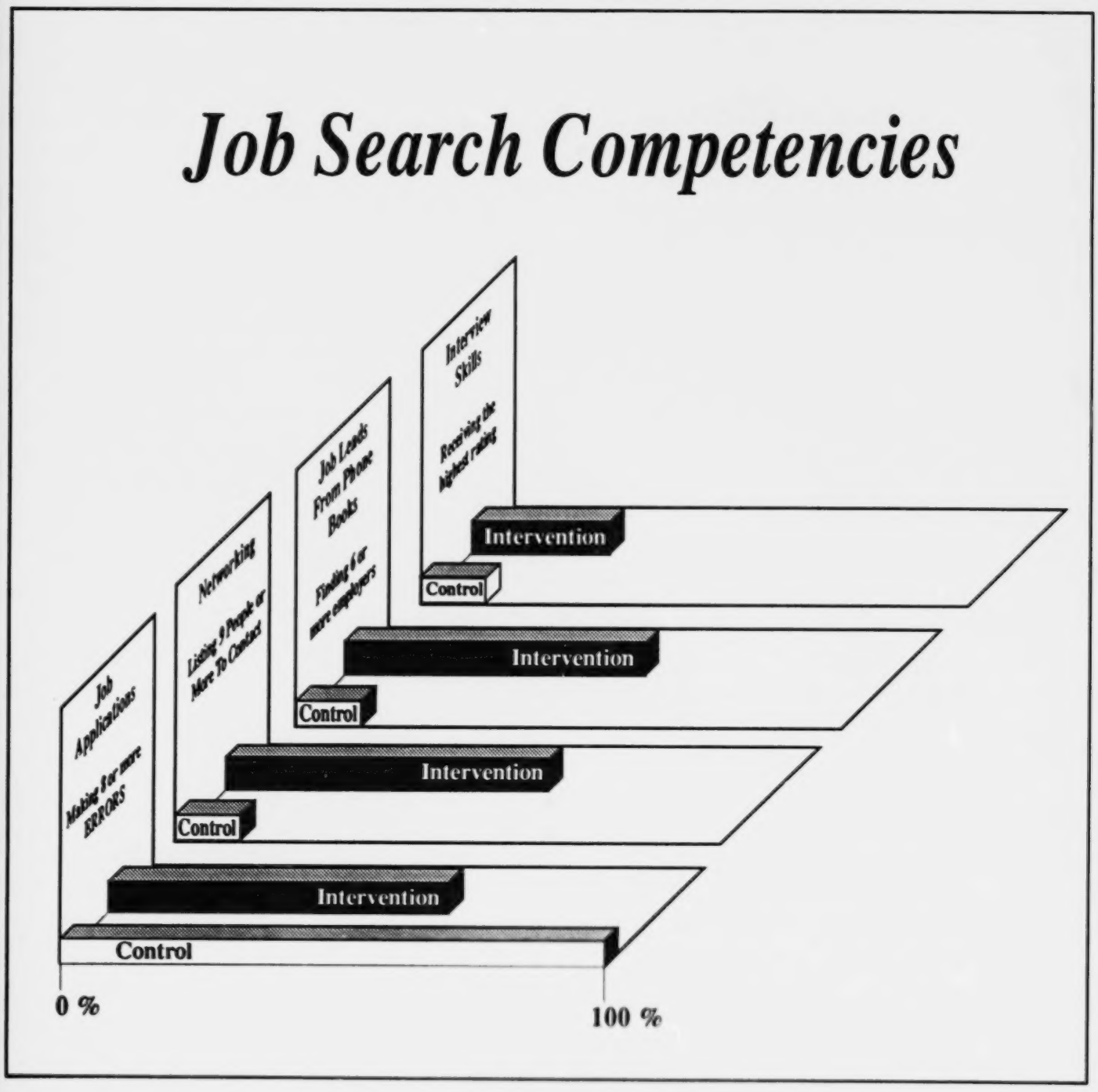
happens to students after they graduate from high school. This study involves contacting former students' families by phone and includes contact with 674 LD students and 543 non-handicapped students. They found that for those students contacted between 1983 and 1986 the employment rates for LD students was within 10% of their non-handicapped peers. Thus, their findings suggest that a learning disability does not really handicap job finding when students initially leave school.[16] Table 16 summarizes these findings, and the complete report is available under the title "I.A: Special Education Students In Transition: Washington State Data 1976-1986. Eugene Edgar and Phyllis Levine, February, 1987. Volume #2." The unengaged rate refers to the percentage of students who are not employed and not in school. The unengaged statistic will be discussed in the leisure section of this report.

| UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES<br>Reported by The University Of Washington Networking and Evaluation Team | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Graduates** | **Employed** | **Unengaged Rates** |
| LD | 63% | 25% |
| Non-Handicapped | 73% | 6% |
| *Table 16* | | |

In another study at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Brian Cobb directs a Job Club Project. The project is coordinated by Angella Patten and Katherine Allen. Their job club type intervention resembles the PSU intervention in many respects. However, there are some notable differences. The Vermont job search model uses teacher-made materials which are patterned after the original work by Nathan Azrin (instead of using workbooks). The Vermont job search class lasts only six weeks instead of 18 weeks as in the PSU project. Finally, the innovators in Vermont have combined LD students with non-handicapped students in an integrated class. The students come from study halls, career classes or special education classes to attend the six-week program. The initial findings are from a sample of students during the first year of operation. The data is summarized in Table 17. Angella Patten cautions that these are preliminary findings based on a sample which will probably triple in size in the future. As such these reported findings are subject to revision and only suggest a general direction.

[16] This was not true for students with mental retardation for whom 38% employment rates were reported.

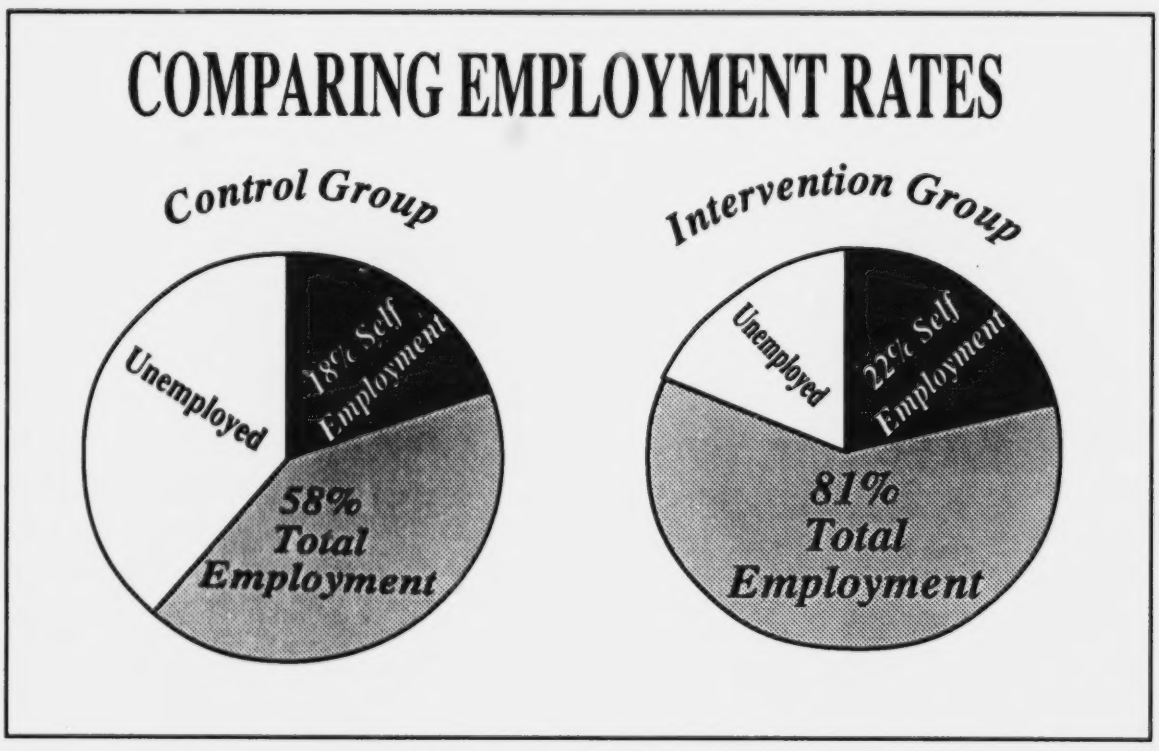
*Table 7 "Job Application, Networking, and Phone Book Competencies" illustrated as a chart*








*Employment Per Centages from Table 15 "Students Employed As A Per Centage Of Those Contacted In Follow-Up" illustrated as a chart*



**HOW PARENTS HELP STUDENTS DURING THE JOB SEARCH**

| Job Search Area | Percent Who Said They Helped |
|---|---|
| Help complete a job application | 73 % |
| Provide Transportation | 62 % |
| Network with friends for leads | 51 % |
| Buy clothes | 38 % |
| Read the want ads | 35 % |
| Network at their place of work | 24 % |
| Help with letters or resumes | 15 % |
| Contact an employment agency | 14 % |

*Table 8*

During the networking test students were asked to list as many contacts as they could. The contacts were simply people who could provide the student with job tips or leads. The students in the intervention classes demonstrated marked differences in their ability to list contacts as illustrated in Table 7.

**Interview Competence**

In the intervention group an average of 46% of the students received the highest rating of a #4 compared to only 12% of the control group. These numbers became reversed at the other end of the rating scale. In the lowest rating, representing inappropriate interview behavior, an average of 10% of the intervention students received a rating of #1 while 48% of the control group receive low scores. A summary for these scores is illustrated in Table 9.

| INTERVIEW COMPETENCIES FOR THOSE RECEIVING HIGHEST SCORES | | |
|---|---|---|
| INTERVIEW COMPETENCIES | CONTROL GROUP | INTERVENTION GROUP |
| INITIAL GREETING | 16.0 % | 61.5 % |
| APPEARANCE | 9.7 % | 40.4 % |
| INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS | 14.7 % | 54.4 % |
| ABILITY TO DESCRIBE SKILLS | 11.8 % | 42.1 % |
| ANSWERING EMPLOYER'S CONCERNS & PROBINGS | 11.8 % | 42.0% |
| REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PAY AND CONDITIONS | 14.7 % | 50.9 % |
| ASKS APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS | 8.8 % | 39.3 % |
| ENDS INTERVIEW EFFECTIVELY | 8.8 % | 35.1 % |

*Table 9*

The difference between the two groups is apparent. When the above factors were correlated statistically with employment, it was found that two interview skills were good predictors of employment , while the lack of these skills correlated with unemployment. The most significantly correlated interview skills were:

- ABILITY TO DESCRIBE SKILLS
- REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS ABOUT PAY AND CONDITIONS

Another interview skill with a borderline statistical significance comes at the end of the interview:

- ENDS INTERVIEW EFFECTIVELY.

Ending the interview is a unique skill. Many employers comment that upon ending an interview with a candidate they are sometimes unsure of the interest or commitment level of the job seeker. As a result effective curriculums will teach students how to "close the sale" or end the interview. This instruction in the project curriculum guides the students with three closing steps:

(1) Repeat their interest in the job.

(2) Summarize their qualifications.

(3) Ask for an opportunity to check back with the employer.

**Comparing Job and Leisure Interventions**

In general, those receiving 18 weeks of job search training got higher scores in the interview rating than those receiving 9 weeks of job search and 9 weeks of leisure search. However, the leisure search group scored better in three competency areas: appearance, realistic expectations, and networking. It is difficult to determine why appearance was higher except to note that the leisure class took place in a rural school district where dress habits may be more conservative. The teacher also reported that students did much better in their vocational decision making after completing the leisure interest inventory exercises. This may partially explain the higher score in realistic job expectations. The networking score is easy to explain because this is a major thrust of the leisure curriculum. Students learn to network to find leisure experts. Unlike the labor market, those looking for leisure opportunities do not have access to leisure-want-ads or state leisure agencies.

## INTERPRETATION OF COMPETENCY SCORES

Measuring job search competencies is a new assessment area. The competencies identified match those practices associated with successful job seekers and job club programs (see books by Kimeldorf, Farr, or Wegmann). The reasons for focusing on networking, interviewing, applications, and phone book skills is discussed next.

Using the phone and phone book as a centerpiece in job search training reflects some of the innovations begun in job clubs. Emphasizing phone books also reflects the major employment role played by small business. Most of the new jobs are being created in the small business sector. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's ES 202 Program Data study, only 1% of employers have over 250 employees and two-thirds of the new jobs between 1969 and 1976 were created in small businesses with 20 or fewer employees (Farr. 1988). It is critical to teach

students how to access these small businesses. Since the phone book lists most small businesses, learning how to use this reference becomes a critical skill. In addition to being an excellent reference of potential employers, the phone book is used in the traditional job club to develop interview and contact possibilities. Job club graduates learn how to use the phone in the same way a job development or employment agency uses the phone contact to develop an opening. The phone is also a valuable tool because one can cover a lot more ground phoning than going in person.

In the *Job Search Education* curriculum, phoning is taught first by role-playing and then is carried out under teacher-coached supervision. The scripts begin with quick and simple labor market phone surveys about local hiring expectations and pay. Then the scripts become more involved, progressing toward phoning for informational interview appointments, and ending with scripts soliciting job openings. Just like a math class, the student gradually masters the complex phone skills in small steps. However, the likelihood of using the phone away from the class dramatically declines as the students move out of the supportive job club atmosphere. This is one reason why schools should consider an after-school job club format for those who complete a job search course. An after school program could provide the continued support that could make the difference in looking alone and looking in a coached and supported environment. Even without this kind of support, the author believes that phoning results in enduring and positive benefits. The phone script practice adds realism and helps students learn the value of mastering the phone book for job looking purposes. Practicing what to say over the phone also helps students learn what to say to employers when they later visit businesses in person.

All of the job search and leisure search students did extremely well in networking demonstrations. However, there seems to be some confusion about networking in the special education literature. Some people argue that because researchers report special education students using networks, the students subsequently have nothing else to learn about this subject. Another point of view recognizes regardless of the fact that people all belong to and tend to use a social network, that their ability to use in job finding varies a great deal. The key job search skill is not how to use an existing network, but rather how to expand it. Mark Granovettter labelled this key networking principle *the strength of weak ties*. In a survey of people who successfully found work, one-fourth of the people got their job lead information from someone they had seen infrequently, once a year or less. In addition, those who got their job leads from infrequent or less-than-intimate sources earned $2500 a year more than those who got jobs leads from close, person networks of families and friends (Wegmann. 1985). Therefore, the job search education challenge is to teach students effective networking. In the book *Job Search Education* and

*Pathways To Work* this is taught in three phases. In the first phase students learn how to identify their networking contacts. In the second phase students practice how to approach people for advice because information is gold. Practice often begins with familiar people and then proceeds outwards towards less intimate sources, including strangers. In these books networking usually illustrated and practiced through scripts and role-plays. Finally, students are taught how to maintain a network with thank-you letters.

The interview competencies in Table 9 complement the national labor market research findings about effective interviewing. For example, many job search experts have stated that 80% of the people who interview cannot adequately describe their skills to an employer. The percentage of interviewees have difficulties handling probing questions. As a result many job seekers are eliminated from consideration and remain unemployed longer than necessary (Gaither, 1985; and Farr, 1988). Therefore, when selecting job search training materials it is important that the scope and sequence of instruction continually prompts the student toward improvement in articulation skills. Articulation in this sense means the ability to convincingly describe one's skills in detail or with examples. For example, in most quality programs the ability to articulates one's skills is first encountered in the skill identification exercises. Students soon realize that one word descriptions of skills are not enough. They learn how to "paint a word picture" in the *Job Search Education* program and they learn the "proof by example" in the materials authored by Farr and Gaither. Later, articulation is stressed in the written form during resume writing exercises. Finally, students do mock interviews where they are encouraged to be convincing. For example, in the Kimeldorf books most of the mock interview points are earned for describing skills in detail.

Expressing realistic expectations about pay and work hours is also very important during the interview. Many entry level workers are not hired because they expect too much or offer too little during an interview. The employer then figures that the applicant might not last very long on the job. Students gained realistic knowledge of the job by reading about jobs in the intervention classes. Then they made appointments to conduct informational interviews with employers. These mentoring experiences improve the student's awareness of employer's expectations.

## *PART II—JOB SEARCH BEHAVIOR AFTER TRAINING*

During the follow-up about employment, students were divided into three groups at the time of the phone call: employed; unemployed and actively looking; and unemployed or stopped looking. Each group was asked a different set of questions depending on which group they belonged to. The goal was to determine the methods they used in finding work or the reasons for quitting the job search.

### Methods Used By Employed Job Seekers

Students in the intervention groups relied on using many more job finding techniques than those who did not. The leisure group used approximately the same number of techniques at about the same rates as the students completing the pure job search class (lasting 18 weeks). These findings are summarized in Tables 10 and 11. Each chart lists the methods used in terms of priority usage. For example, Networking and Direct Contact #1 methods were reported as used most frequently, while talking to parents, contacting agencies, and using the want ads were used least often. No one reported finding their jobs with the want ads and those reportedly using agencies or talking to parents were in a definite minority.

| METHODS USED BY SUCCESSFUL SEEKERS TO LEARN OPENINGS | | |
|---|---|---|
| **TECHNIQUES USED** | **CONTROL GROUP** | **INTERVENTION GROUP** |
| NETWORKING<br>with people outside of the family. | ✓ | ✓ |
| DIRECT CONTACT #1<br>Go in and ask for an application. | -- | ✓ |
| DIRECT CONTACT #2<br>Go in and ask to speak to manager. | -- | ✓ |
| SCHOOL AGENCY<br>Ask for help at school. | ✓ | ✓ |
| PARENTS<br>Solicit their help. | -- | ✓ |
| AGENCY<br>Public or Private<br>employment agency. | -- | ✓ |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| WANT ADS [12] | -- | -- |

*Table 10*

| COMPARING DIFFERENT INTERVENTION CURRICULUM GROUPS — METHODS USED BY SUCCESSFUL JOB SEEKERS TO LEARN OPENINGS — | | |
|---|---|---|
| **TECHNIQUES USED** | **LEISURE AND JOB GROUP L and J Group** | **JOB SEARCH GROUP J Group** |
| NETWORKING with people outside of the family. | ✓ | ✓ |
| DIRECT CONTACT #1 Go in and ask for an application. | ✓ | ✓ |
| DIRECT CONTACT #2 Go in and ask to speak to manager. | ✓ | ✓ |
| SCHOOL AGENCY Ask for help at school. | -- | ✓ |
| PARENTS Solicit their help. | ✓ | -- |
| AGENCY Public or Private employment agency. | -- | ✓ |
| WANT ADS | -- | -- |

*Table 11*

**Methods Used By Unemployed and *Actively Looking Job Seekers***

Table 12 shows the methods used by those unemployed at the time of the follow-up employment study, but still actively seeking work. A slightly different set of questions reveals the quality of follow-up or checking back with an employer. In addition, students were asked about the use of the phone.[13] As noted in Table 11 the two intervention sub-groups reported slightly different

[12]This is not particularly alarming because only 15% of the people find their jobs using the want ads. Wegmann believes that 70% of the jobs available are not advertised. Thus the students displayed job search behaviors consistent with the reality of want ads. However, students are encouraged to use all sources of job lead information.
[13]The phone question was inadvertently left out of the follow-up questions for employed students.

behaviors.[14] It appears that the intervention groups were much more persistent in checking back with employers and used the phone more often.

| METHODS USED BY ACTIVE JOB SEEKERS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Method Used | CONTROL C1 | LEISURE & JOB L & J | JOB SEARCH J |
| NETWORKING | 100 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| DIRECT CONTACT #1 Asking for applications. | 67 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| DIRECT CONTACT #2 Go in and ask for manager. | 100 % | 66 % | 92 % |
| WANT ADS | 63 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| FOLLOW-UP Checking Back With Employer | 33 % | 100 % | 100 % |
| PHONE ABOUT JOBS | 38 % | 66 % | 80 % |

*Table 12*

**Persistence**

Persistence is especially important and deserves its own special mention. The ability to check back with an employer, or the ability to continue the search in the face of rejection is key to success. It appears that the job search students were more likely to check back with their employer. A more direct measure of persistent behaviors results when unemployed students were asked if they were still looking for work. The difference in persistence is quite clear between the control and intervention group. Table 13 shows that when the persistence of both C1 and C2 are averaged only 45% said they checked back while 100% checked back in the intervention group.

| RATES OF JOB HUNTING PERSISTENCE | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Control: Averages C1 and C2 | Intervention Group |
| Those reporting continuing their job hunt efforts | 45% | 100% |

*Table 13*

14 It should be noted that those unemployed in the intervention groups represented only about 20% whereas C1 represented about an 80% unemployment rate.

**Those Who Stop Looking For Work: Three Reasons**

There are many reasons why people finally stop looking for work. However, in this study only voluntary reasons were considered as valid. For example, four students were excluded from the group of employed or unemployed because they are removed from being able to look for work. Two students in the leisure class and two in the job search classes were removed due to pregnancy, incarceration, and full time summer school commitment. The remaining unemployed job seekers cited three reasons for quitting their job search as shown in Table 14.

| REASONS FOR QUITTING THE JOB SEARCH |
|---|
| • Lost interest in the jobs I found available.<br>• Not qualified for the jobs available.<br>• Need more job search training. |

*Table 14*

**INTERPRETATION OF JOB SEARCH BEHAVIORS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

In most studies of successful job search behaviors two methods stand out as being the most effective: direct contact and networking. It appears that the control group has figured this out, and has concentrated on these two areas. However, another important tactic is also discussed in the literature. This tactic suggests that successful job seekers use more than one method of hunting. In Richard Bolles's best selling book *What Color Is Your Parachute* and in the syndicated career-advice-columns by Joyce Lain Kennedy, the job seeker is constantly urged to use conventional and non-conventional methods. Job seekers are urged to use as many different methods as possible! The data clearly suggests that the intervention group used many more techniques than the control group, including the non-conventional method of phoning for leads.

Persistence and follow-up are also important and hard to teach. Mike Farr summarized a study showing the critical importance of persistence when he noted that only 2% of the unemployed spend 11 hours or more per week looking for work! The average unemployed adult typically gives up after one to four hours looking each week, while exhibit an even lower rate of time spent job hunting (Kimeldorf, 1985). These traits are also effective methods in tight labor markets. It appears that the intervention students are more likely to check back and be persistent and to continue their search in the face of unemployment.

For those who have given up three possible responses could be considered: training, counselling, and job hunt support. This idea suggests a strategy of supporting the job hunter. As suggested earlier, those interested in transition success might want to consider after-school support programs.

**The Retention Issue**

Another commonly discussed issue is job retention. There seems to be a mixed perception of the problem and its relation to job finding. Some people decry the turnover rate of special education students. In a new study being conducted at the University of Washington ("Deriving Job Skills From The Workplace") John Emerson reported some initial findings suggesting job retention or endurance is rarely found in all entry level employees. Emerson talked to 80 entry level employers and asked them how long they expected new workers to last. Emerson reported that he was surprised at the low expectations of employers. He reports that fast food employers talk in terms of 1-2 months with the average employer indicating that employees typically stay less than 1 year.

In reality most entry level jobs are low pay and low skill, routine jobs.The turnover rate is expectedly high. Thus the issue of retention for special education students may not be an issue, when compared to their non-handicapped peers. One should not hold special education students accountable for greater job tenure than non-handicapped peers. Why should special educators be asked to encourage job retention for jobs which do not expect nor reward tenure? Instead, a more meaningful role for educators would be the advocacy for a living-minimum-wage, rather than raising the minimum stay on minimal jobs.

At the same time, the author believes that job search training will improve a student's commitment to the job site in two fundamental ways. First, students who become successful job seekers learn to understand and relate to employers' expectations . They learn quickly that good work habits are of keen interest to all employers. Students then practice identifying and articulating their own good work habits. And this becomes a form of positive affirmations or self-concept building. Additionally, students who must find their own jobs, rather than rely on placement assistance, are less likely to walk off the job on a whim.

## EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

At first, employment outcomes seem a simple matter of counting the number of students with jobs. But the data did not come to the researcher in simple black and white terms. Some students might report that they had just lost a job, others were going to start a job next week, and some had two jobs. In fact, about four students in the intervention group reported reusing their job search skills to change jobs to get better hours, pay or both. The only workable solution was to count employment only at the time of the phone call. It was also important to consider the quality of employer as reflected in the number of hours, the wages, reported job satisfaction. Another consideration was the type of employment. If the work involved working at home or for a neighbor if was counted and defined as self-employment. If the job involved a more formal work setting and taxes it was defined as competitive labor . All of the efforts at follow-up and their results are summarized in Table 15, 18, and 19 with comparisons made to other national studies found in Tables 16 and 17.

**Employment Figures**

With limited time and staff it was important to be selective in concentrating the follow-up efforts. Three strategies were employed. First, since the control group was least familiar to the staffers, and because it was smaller (60 across two semesters), they were contacted first at the end of the school year in 1987. Thus, *all* control students in 1986-87 were contacted and entered in the data base. But unfortunately only 25% could be contacted successfully and they reported a very low employment rate while still in school (20%). By repeating the follow-up strategy a second time in the fall of 1987 the return rate increased to 32% and the employment rate was more reasonably reported at 58%.

Follow-up of the intervention group concentrated on the first semester of 1987 (January to June 87) for two reasons. At the beginning of the semester one site failed to materialize and another had very small numbers. Therefore, during this time control group data was set as a priority for collection and intervention data was prioritized the following semester. Secondly, it was felt that the intervention students with the most recent contact would be the easiest to follow-up and turned out to be about the same size (63) as the total the control group (60). In the summer of 1987 the staff contacted the intervention group. However, 5 students were deleted from the final follow-up tally due to summer school, pregnancy, and incarceration. With this strategy our response rate was calculated at 40% .

| STUDENTS EMPLOYED AS A PERCENTAGE OF THOSE CONTACTED IN FOLLOW-UP | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CATEGORIES | **Control C1** Before Summer (Semester 2) | **Control C2** After Summer Semesters 1 & 2 | **L & J** Leisure-9 weeks Job Search-9 weeks Semesters 1&2 | **J only** 18 weeks of Job Search (Semester 2 only) | **Total Intervention** L&J + Job only (Semester 2) |
| Number successfully contacted | 15 | 19 | 5 | 22 | 27 |
| The % of total N in the group | 25% (N = 60) | 32% (N = 60) | 63% (N = 8) | 44% (N = 50) | 43% (N = 63[15]) |
| Number Employed | 3 | 11 | 4 | 18 | 22 |
| **Employment Rate for those contacted** | 20% | **58%** | 80% | 82% | **81%** |
| SELF-EMPLOYED | 0% | **18%** | 40% | 22% | **22%** |
| COMPETITIVELY EMPLOYED | 20% | **40%** | 40% | 60% | **59%** |

*Table 15*

The leisure group was by far the smallest sample. This is because sites using the combined leisure and job search comprised only 20% of the total sites during 1986-87. Perhaps this represents the lag time for new ideas. In the third year (1987-88) about 50% of the sites experimented with curriculums other than *Job Search Education* and about 30% used the leisure program. Because the 1986-87 data from the leisure group is small it can only suggest possibilities and is not nearly as definitive as the results from the pure job search intervention groups (where job search training lasted an entire semester). The leisure and job search group (L & J) achieved similar rates of employment as the full semester job search group (J only): 80% and 82% respectively.

### Other Studies—Washington and Vermont

Two other transition studies were contacted to about their most recent findings for 1988.The first was the Network and Evaluation Team located at the University of Washington's Experimental Education Unit, Seattle, Washington. They have conducted a major study to determine what

15 Five students were not counted in the final employment tally (as explained in the previous passage) due to personal choices or problems which prevented them from looking for work.

| VERMONT JOB CLUB OUTCOMES | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **GROUPS** | Total | Control | Intervention |
| Total in study | 69 | 34 | 35 |
| **OUTCOMES** | | | |
| EMPLOYMENT | 67% | **63%** | **72%** |
| SUB-MIN WAGE | 7% | 15% | 0% |
| MIN WAGE OR BETTER | 89% | 80% | 100% |
| **STATUS AT THE TIME OF FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW** | | | |
| Graduated | 44% | **57%** | **13%** |
| Dropped Out & Under 18[17] | 7% | 3% | 12% |
| Senior | 19% | 15% | 23% |
| Junior/Sophomore | 30% | 33% | 29% |

*Table 17*

It is useful to point out that the students in the Vermont control group had graduated at a higher rate, while the students in the Intervention group had a higher rate of dropping out. It is possible a more dramatic difference will be found between the control and intervention groups when the sample size increases. It is also the opinion of this author that longer periods of training will result in improved employment results. Both the larger numbers of students served and longer periods of job search instruction may be realized as Vermont teachers adopt the project's curriculum and include it in their regular offerings.

**Hours and Wages**

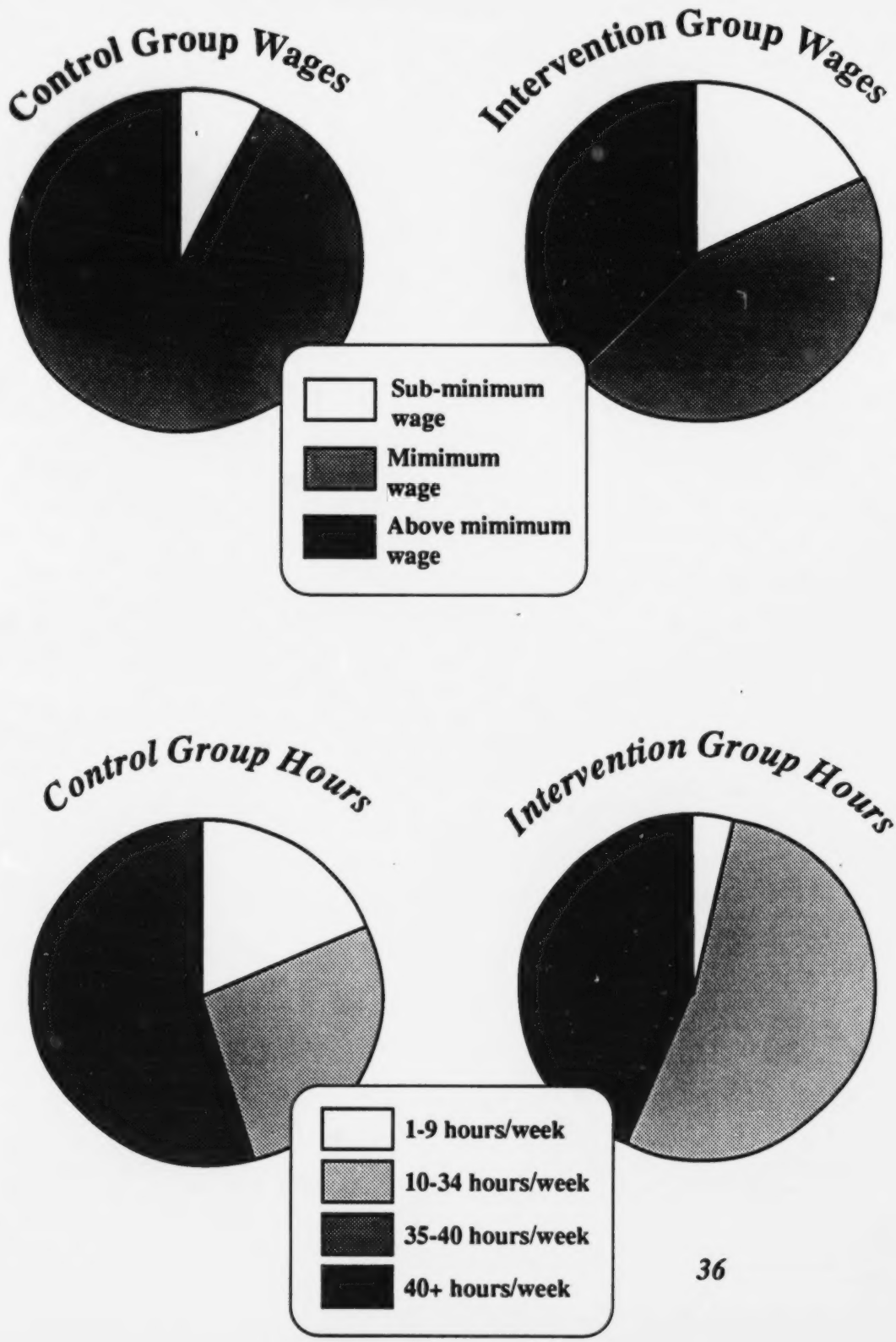
Hours and pay are sometimes difficult to compare. How does one compare hours if students do not seek or find full-time work? The data collected suggests that students in the intervention group appear to have worked slightly fewer hours per week. But, it is not clear if this was by choice, or not. In fact the difference is hard to calculate. When the percentages are aggregated for the most common hours (10-34) the difference between the control and intervention group is only 10%, being 80% and 90% respectively. Wages are easier to compare because everyone wants the highest possible pay. The pay rates show the intervention group had more people in the extremes of sub-minimum and above minimum pay. Hours and wages are summarized in Table 18. In the end the total wages earned might even out, but this data was not available in the study.

17 In an Oregon study of high school dropouts it was reported that 50.9% did not have jobs at the time of the study, according to a SAIL newsletter published by the Oregon Department of Education. 1987.

| HOURS AND WAGES | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **CATEGORIES** | **Control C1** Before Summer | **Control C2** After Summer | **L & J** 9 weeks Leisure & 9 weeks Job Search | **J only** 18 weeks of Job Search | **Intervention** L & J + L |
| **HOURS** | | | | | |
| 1-9 hrs/wk (part time: 1/4 time) | 10% | **18%** | 12% | 0% | **3%** |
| 10-34 hrs/wk (part time: 1/2 time) | 40% | **27%** | 50% | 63% | **59%** |
| 35-40 hrs/wk (full time) | 40% | **53%** | 38% | 29% | **31%** |
| 40+ hrs/wk (over full time) | 10% | **0%** | 0% | 8% | **7%** |
| **PAY PER HOUR** | | | | | |
| Sub-minimum wage | 15% | **9%** | 29% | 13% | **17%** |
| Minimum wage ($3.35/hr) | 65% | **64%** | 57% | 41% | **45%** |
| Above minimum | 20% | **27%** | 14% | 46% | **38%** |

*Table 18*

Table 18 "Hours And Wages" illustrated as a chart



**Occupational Diversity**

One could hypothesize that students possessing more self-directed job search behaviors might be able to choose from a more diverse set of jobs. The corollary would be that students without such skills would simply take whatever job is open. It appears that those in the job finding classes found work in a more diverse set of occupations as illustrated in Table 19.[18]

| OCCUPATIONAL DIVERSITY<br>✘ = approximately 10 % (Between 8-12%) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **JOB CATEGORIES** | **Control C2** | **Intervention** |
| Food Service | ✘ ✘ ✘ | ✘ ✘ |
| Maintenance<br>Outdoor & In | ✘ ✘ ✘ | ✘ |
| Child Care | ✘ | ✘ ✘ |
| School | - - | ✘ |
| Repair,Building | ✘ | ✘ ✘ ✘ |
| Retail | ✘ | ✘ |
| Clerical | - - | ✘ |

*Table 19*

**Job Satisfaction**

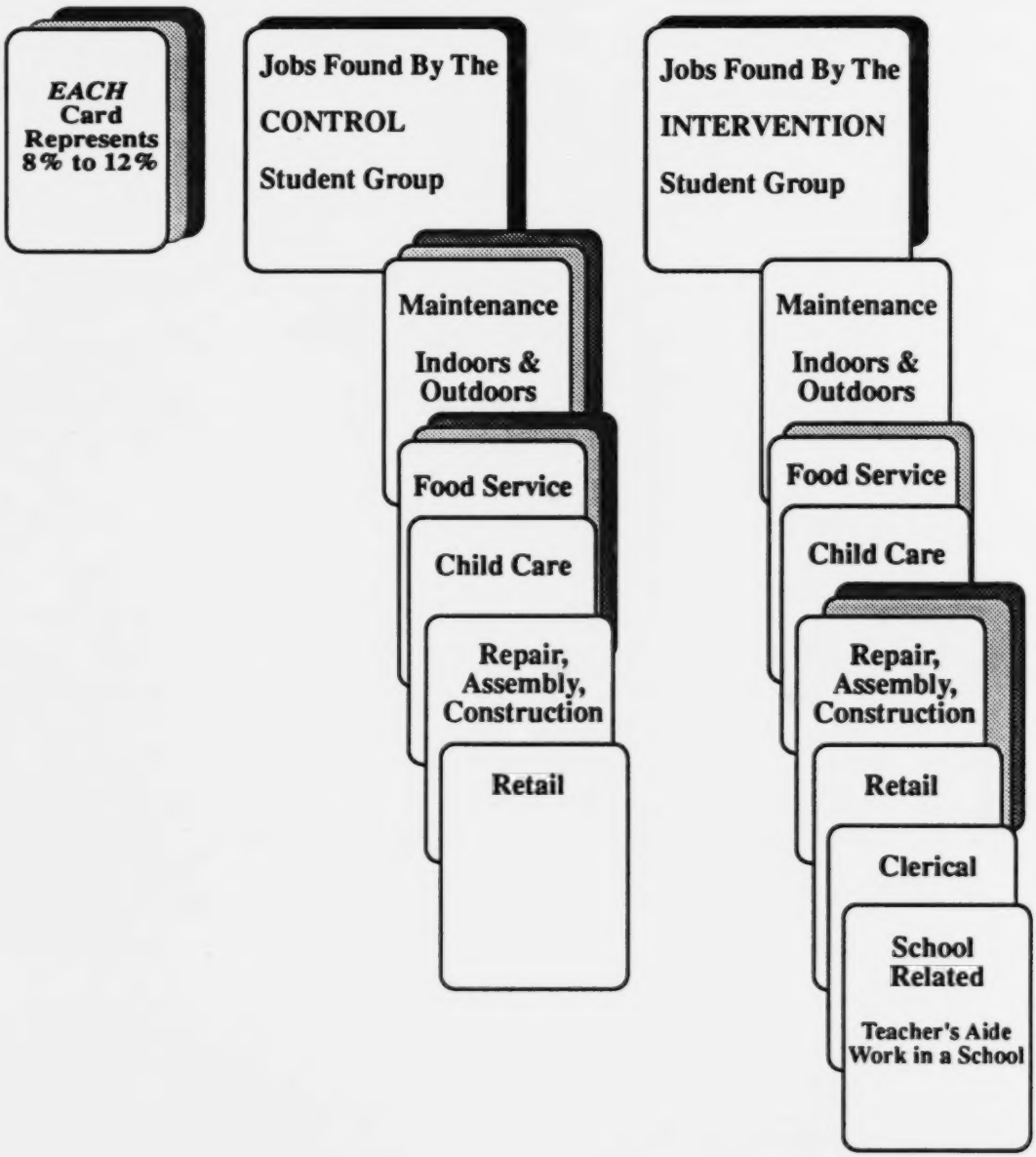
Students were also asked about their job satisfaction. In the intervention groups, 93% reported being satisfied with their job. This may reflect the fact that they were responsible for finding their own job. The control data was not used because at the time of the in-depth follow-up only three control students in C1 reported employment.

18 The diversity might simply reflect the fact that larger numbers of employed students in the intervention group could result in greater diversity. However, the intervention group still was less concentrated in the minimal entry level jobs of Food Service and Maintenance, where 2/3 of the control group found employment.

*Table 7 "Occupational Diversity" illustrated as a chart*

# Occupational Diversity

***Stacking up the different jobs found by the Control and Intervention Groups***



## INTERPRETATION OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

There are many ways to interpret employment outcomes. A simple interpretation begins with a statement of employment percentages while a more sophisticated analysis looks at the quality of jobs being found. The simpler approach is easiest to compare with other findings and the sophisticated method actually reflects a subjective conclusion involving values and perceptions of labor market opportunities. For example, at the simplest level of interpretation the project demonstrated that students involved in the job search training intervention had reduced their unemployment almost in half compared to the control group. It is also important to note the intervention group's employment rate was higher than the rate achieved by non-handicapped students reported in the University of Washington study.

At the next level of sophistication, the wages and hours could be compared. However, the findings were not definitive in this case considering the small number of students involved. Overall, the students in the intervention group appeared to be less concentrated in the middle ranges than the control group (C2). With less students in the middle, there were more intervention students represented at higher and lower levels of hours and wage rates. It is not clear if this small degree of difference is significant . For example, there was no data indicating if most students really wanted to work more hours than the job offered them. Additionally, the author is unaware of any research demonstrating that a particular intervention (or lack of one) can leverage students into jobs paying significantly more than the minimum wage.

In addition, a recent (1988) study by John Emerson suggests that full time work may simply not be very accessible to entry level workers. Emerson's study at the University of Washington involved interviewing approximately 80 employers of entry level workers about opportunities for full time work. Emerson reports that almost all of the employers indicated that full time work was hardly ever offered entry level employees because the cost of benefits added to wages provided a disincentive to employers.[19]

Another interpretation of the wage and hour data hypothesizes that the greater spread across high to low categories could indicate an incremental form of success for the intervention group students. This hypothesis begins with the question, "How did the intervention improve the student's work-life?" At the simplest level there would have probably been 23% less students employed (the difference between the intervention and control group employment rate). Then

19 These results were reported orally to Kimeldorf and represent unpublished results from the "Deriving Job Skills From The Workplace" study, coordinated by John Emerson.

one can ask, "Are the students comprising the 23% different normally in a vocational or career development sense?" The data suggests that these students might have been entering the labor market for the first time. Previously this 23% might not have possessed the drive, maturity, confidence, or skills to find a job. These may be students just entering the work-ethic world for the first time. And as such, part-time jobs at entry level wages may be all that they can handle. Perhaps these new labor market recruits were concentrated in the lower end of wages and hours. At the same time the project demonstrated that all of the students improved their job search competencies, with many demonstrating superior job search skills (as compared to the control group). This could have helped the students who normally find entry level jobs to move up into higher paying jobs or jobs offering more hours. Both questions and their hypotheses could explain why a few students in the intervention group, when compared to the control group, were less likely to be found in the middle regions and more likely to be found in the the upper and lower extremes. As one can see, interpreting the data at higher levels is a more subjective process.

Finally, an attempt was made to define the job quality or opportunity. Overall, the control and intervention students appear to have found similar jobs concentrated in entry level, service occupations. However, the intervention group appears to have found a more diverse set of jobs. For example, the control group job titles can be summarized into five different occupational areas whereas the intervention group was spread across seven areas. The control group found about 60% of their jobs in the traditional areas of food service and maintenance work, whereas the intervention group found jobs in office, sales, and repair work.

Stepping back further one can study patterns of job changing against a backdrop of low pay entry level job opportunities. While a large number of new jobs are being created in the 1980s, they tend to be low-pay, low skill jobs. The higher paying jobs in management and unionized occupations seem to be on the decline. As a result one sees a labor market that offers more opportunities for downward mobility, rather than upward mobility. One example of this is encapsulated in Wegmann's book *Looking For Work In The New Economy* where he observed that only the lowest paid jobs are accessible in large numbers (often remaining unfilled) while there is an extreme amount of competition for any job paying a decent wage. One can conclude that the minimum wage is not a living wage and that all Americans face this dilemma—special education students or otherwise. This tragic turn of events is reflected in two contemporary phenomena: a high rate of job turnover and the previously mentioned "crowded nest syndrome".

All of the labor market studies profile an employment world with one constant: change. The U.S.Department of Labor Bulletin #2096 and #2174 report that on the average people under 35 change jobs every 1.5 years and people over 35 years of age change jobs every three years. In addition they estimate that the average person will change careers five to seven times in a lifetime.[20] Students just trying out their adult wings probably change more frequently.

The crowded nest syndrome is the new social phenomenon where adults return to the nest to live. The usual reasons given are the fact that young adults can no longer replicate the middle class lifestyle they once took for granted without having access to at least two incomes. Therefore, many young adults who graduate unexpectedly return home to sort out their occupational destiny in a world where middle upward mobility and their related jobs are far limited than it was in their parents era. Families today face uncertain futures together.[21]

Some people think that education is the answer. But the job turnover rate reflects a lot of dissatisfaction with work for both highly educated and minimally educated persons. Too often the American work force appears to be over-educated or over-skilled for the work currently available. Richard Bolles writes that 52% of employed people say their work is unsatisfying, 50% changed jobs in the last five years, and 30% believed that their job adversely effects their health. Later he notes that 80% of workers surveyed report feeling underemployed (1981). Many studies suggest that people with college degrees as well as those with disabilities often feel underemployed.

***Within this changing social milieu, how can educators help their students improve the quality of their school-to-work transitions?***

First of all, educators can recognize that some of the forces are beyond the scope of school reform and require a political or social reform. For example, educators could link their educational concerns to social realities by becoming advocates of a minimum wage that pays a living wage. If the wage became a true living wage, entry level jobs would become suddenly more attractive and employers might begin selecting applicants based on secondary criteria such as finishing various levels of education. This might help at-risk students find the motivation to stay in school.

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20 Between 1965-1975 it was previously estimated that people would only endure three to five career changes in their life. Since 1975 many changes have occurred in the economic and labor markets which may be the source behind increasing the rate of career change.

21 Perhaps this is why our data about parent expectations showed that from 30-50% of the parents were unable to state any clear expectation for their son's or daughter's future employment or independent living.

Second, the interventions suggested in the PSU and Washington studies suggest that all students can benefit from job search training. In the final years of the PSU project, several teachers recruited students from the school at large and combined them in classes serving mildly handicapped students. They reported that this blended service delivery resulted in higher levels of motivation and performance for the special education students.[22] It became a fine testimonial to mainstreaming efforts. As more and more LD students are placed back into the mainstream this can become an opportunity to provide job search training to all students regardless of their label, non-label, or learning needs

Third, one can recognize that job turnover demands a more vigorous and more precise response than generic or traditional vocational and academic requirements. If students are going to have some sort of choice in the future, they need to leave the school system with job search competencies and the confidence to use them. A job search program should belong as an equal partner in the core curriculum. Perhaps the great lesson of the 1980s is the notion that the Horatio Alger dream of upward mobility has exceeded its warranty period. As a result the only guarantee will last a lifetime today, and this is the promise that students will need to use their job search skills across a life time. It is time for educators to bring their curriculums in congruence with this reality.

22 In 1983 Martin Kimeldorf organized a job club combining LD and MR students with non-special education students from a Diversified Occupations class after school. The mixture proved to be very useful and helped all students to achieve more through cooperative learning. It was felt that the lower functioning special education students gained confidence from working in groups with other students and in seeing their peers aggressively attack the local labor market.

## THE LEISURE CONNECTION[23]

The importance of leisure training in the transition from school-to-work and independence is a new concern. One indirect indication of the importance of leisure opportunities comes from the University of Washington study. In this study employment differences between LD and non-handicapped students were not as great as the difference in unengagement rates. Unengagement is defined as being uninvolved with either work or school after graduation. This discrepancy is shown previously in Table 16 and is duplicated below as Table 16-a. The LD graduate have almost four times the rate of *unengagement*, to coin a new term. In other words, they are more likely not to be engaged in work or school.

| OUTCOMES REPORTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Graduates** | **Employed** | **Unengaged Rates** |
| LD | 63% | 25% |
| Non-Handicapped | 73% | 6% |

*Table 16-a*

What are the LD students doing within the unengaged time? No one knows for sure. Guardians typically feel that the young adult has too much "free time", but free time is not necessarily satisfactory or fulfilling time. Teachers tended to observe that their students had little involvement in extracurricular activities. They said that students often reported being bored over the weekend. This is certainly borne out in the PSU project data where 60% of the students reported having no involvement in extracurricular activities. It appears that theirs is a problem in search of consensus and definition.

This situation raises a significant question: Should schools attempt to help students identify more productive uses of their leisure time? Dewey stated that the second principle in education was preparation for leisure. Students in the leisure search classes expressed high degrees of satisfaction with the class, in fact higher than those taking the job search class for 18 weeks. Finally, one recognizes that not every student is ready to look for work. At the same time, a leisure search provides an opportunity for learning basic search skills which are applicable to job searches. This helps prepare students who are not yet mature enough to value working or job finding. Perhaps if the leisure search is seen as a foundation or complement of job search training, then parents will be seen as a more vital part of the curriculum.

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23 See the essay *LEISURE AND WORK SEARCH Survival Skills for the 21st Century* by Martin Kimeldorf for a complete description of the work-leisure search process.

Leisure search programs do not attempt to teach leisure values. Instead, the emphasis on search skills recognizes that leisure decisions and leisure fulfillment are individually defined activities reflecting personal values, opportunities, and initiative. Leisure search does share many of the same assumptions as leisure wellness. Leisure wellness author Forrest McDowell points out that free time can be empty time, feared time, frantic time, and time spent in isolation; whereas those actively engaged in thinking about and planning their leisure tend to describe their leisure as fulfilling, creative, or engaging. The wellness movement advocates developing a sense of responsibility for one's leisure satisfaction. Similarly a leisure search class stresses three self-directed activities. First, students assess their leisure preferences, styles, and possibilities. Second, students research local options. Third, they conclude by making a plan for greater involvement in a self-chosen leisure interest area. The similarity to self-directed job finding programs is apparent.

Measuring the impact of a leisure search proves to be a challenging concept. Testing did not reveal conclusive results for two reasons. First, the sample size was small. Second, leisure testing measures attitudes and by it's nature tends to promote reflection and change. Therefore the evaluation process is always open to debate. McDowell points out that leisure remains somewhat ambiguous because of the very nature of the subject. He does not see ambiguity as something to be feared. Rather, he asserts that any discussion or research about leisure tends to raise consciousness about one's leisure . In other words, consensus is not as important as is the consent to study one's leisure decisions and involvement. The final decisions made about one's leisure cannot be objectively measured. However, assessment of individual leisure awareness and attitudes can be attempted.

**Student Response**

The leisure data comes as an instrument designed to inventory leisure attitudes. The survey was given once to a control group of 80 who had never taken the leisure course. Then the test was administered a second time to the 8 students completing the leisure search program in a rural high school. The great difference in numbers means that the findings can only be suggestive at best. These are summarized in Table 20.

Three areas were assessed. The first measured student's awareness of the resources used during leisure. The data shows that students completing the leisure course were generally more realistic about the time and money they spent on leisure. During testing students received positive points for any answer about leisure resources; except the response, "I don't know". In this way, no one

is scored negatively for an opinion, but they do lose points for apathy or unawareness. At the same time, the intervention students seemed more aware of their leisure lifestyle, as indicated by the fact that they consistently used the response "I don't know?" less often in all categories.

The second area evaluated student awareness of the different leisure possibilities. Students reviewed a list of leisure activities and were asked to indicate a present or possible future interest in any of the activities. The intervention group indicated an interest in a greater number of activities.

Third, a composite leisure attitude score shows that the intervention group may value their leisure time more. In the overall indicator of leisure wellness, the intervention group score more often in the high range. However, in the scoring for specific attitudes one sees an interesting contradiction. Students in the intervention group indicated a greater awareness that drugs were used too often in free time. Perhaps a heightened awareness of the importance of leisure diminishes the value of drug usage. The intervention students claimed to be less lonely and more able to enjoy their leisure even when other parts of their lives were unhappy. These are strong indicators of leisure wellness.

| SUMMARY OF LEISURE ATTITUDE SURVEY | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Pre-Test, Control** | **Post-Test, Intervention** |
| **Number in the study** | 80 | 8 |
| **Awareness of Leisure Resources** | | |
| MONEY SPENT IN LEISURE: How much do you spend on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | 14% |
| $25-$45 | 17% | 0% |
| $1-$25 | 63% | 100% |
| TIME SPENT IN LEISURE: How many hours do you spend each week on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | 14% |
| 21-40 hours | 27% | 0% |
| 1-21 hours | 53% | 86% |
| **Leisure Activities Awareness** | | |
| Students are given a list of 28 different leisure activities: ranging from outdoors to indoors, spiritual, civic, and volunteer work, arts and crafts, individual and group activities, etc. Students check off any item they have done or would consider doing in the future. | | |
| Checking Half or More (12-28) | 35% | 50% |
| **Desire To Change My Leisure** | | |
| No change, I am satisfied with my leisure. | 36% | 29% |
| I want more ideas of what to do. | 27% | 14% |
| I want more leisure time. | 18% | 29% |
| I don't know what I would do differently. | 15% | 0% |
| **Sample Indicators of Leisure Wellness** | | |
| I take too many drugs in my free time. | 8% | 63% |
| Important people in my life understand my leisure values. | 14% | 83% |
| I am lonely during my free time. | 26% | 0% |
| I keep up with community events. | 8% | 17% |
| I enjoy learning new things. | 10% | 17% |
| I can enjoy my leisure even when other parts of my life are unhappy. | 20% | 50% |
| **Overall Indicators of Leisure Wellness** | | |
| Low…score overall (16 pts or less) | 53% | 40% |
| Med…score overall (17-24 pts) | 45% | 40% |
| High..score overall (30 or more points) | 2% | 20% |

*Table 20*

**ONE INTERPRETATION OF LEISURE SEARCH SURVEY, TABLE 20**

There are many possible ways to interpret the data in Table 20, and most methods seem to show that the intervention students had more positive attitudes towards themselves or their leisure. An interesting statistic occurs under the category "Desire To Change My Leisure". The control group indicated a higher rate or satisfaction with their current leisure life compared to the intervention group.[24] How does this correlate to the fact that in most other areas the intervention group scored higher? For example, the control group indicated a greater need to get ideas about what to do in their free time, and a smaller desire to have more leisure. In discussing these findings with Dr. McDowell, he suggested that this might make logical sense if one assumes that the intervention students have increased their leisure awareness and enlarged their appetite for a meaningful leisure life. As a result, the intervention students are not as satisfied with their previous or current leisure style and want to improve or change it. It is up to the reader to determine the final interpretation.

The connection between leisure and work is multifaceted. On one hand, unengaged students may need more leisure outlets. In another context Dr.Carl McDaniels argues that leisure is an excellent vehicle for exploring one's talents and interests when he writes, "in leisure young people explore their talents not knowing where they will lead." The instructor in the leisure class felt that the students made better vocational choices after the class because they first considered their leisure interests in depth. This notion is reflected in the way career counselors have used leisure interests to help displaced workers and career changers identify alternate career paths.

In his insightful article "The Work/Leisure Connection" (1984) McDaniels points out the following anticipated changes in the future connection between work and leisure:

1. More varied patterns of work will permit larger amounts of leisure time.
2. More and more people are seeking a balance of work and leisure in their careers.
3. More employees will ask for compensation in the form of time away from work rather than increased pay.[25]
4. More people will seek satisfaction through self-employment.

McDaniels believes that these changes will result in employees demanding more flexibility in scheduling leisure time and longer periods of leisure time. He believes people will place more emphasis on leisure roles, and that more people will seek their satisfaction and *identity* outside of the work place.

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24 In *The Three Boxes of Life*, Bolles reports that only 58% of the adults feel their leisure is satisfying (1981).
25 A name has been given to the new group of workers asking for time instead of monetary compensation. According to McDaniels this new group is dubbed the *non-traditionalist* worker by sociologists Yankelovich and Lefkowitz in 1982.

McDaniels advocates the merging of vocational and leisure counseling and has implemented this concept in the Employee Career Development Program at Virginia Polytechnical Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. He claims that participants in this workshop often say they are satisfied with their jobs, but feel that they need other changes in their lives due to aging, shifting economics, or new family responsibilities. Other workshop participants don't enjoy their work, but feel bound to their community. These people have decided that improving their leisure becomes a way of improving their overall lifestyle when career lives seem frozen. McDaniels offers the iconographic formula in Figure 1 as a lifelong formula expressing the connection between work and leisure across the lifespan.

$$C = W + L$$

Career = Work + Leisure roles

*Figure 1*

Finally, Steve Brannan sums up the thinking of many futurists, when he says, "We are moving from a work-leisure to a leisure-work society". If nothing else, leisure is becoming big business. At the beginning of the 1980s Americans spent $77 billion more on leisure than on defense. Foreign visits contributed another 12 billion dollars. Leisure spending accounted for 1 out of every 8 consumer dollars spent and has increased over 3 times in the last 20 years (McDaniels).

In Kimeldorf's monograph *LEISURE AND WORK SEARCH Survival Skills for the 21st Century* he concludes, "It is not that the work ethic is dying in the last part of the 20th century, but rather that the leisure ethic is reborn. Today we are achieving a balanced appreciation for work and leisure roles. At a party when they ask, 'What do you do?' it is no longer simply a matter of giving your job title." The architect of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Sidney Fine, guesses that one-half of all jobs in North American could be learned in two weeks or less (1980). Certainly this undermines the tendency to identify one's whole life with their work. As Richard Bolles notes, leisure can give one a sense of completion and satisfaction that may not be found in work (1981).

Finally, one must question whether work or employment can remain dependent upon the labor market. Dr. Watts argues in the *British Journal of Educational Studies* [26] that the British labor

26 The journal article is entitled "Beyond Unemployment? Schools And The Future."

market may no longer be able to supply enough profits and jobs at the same time (Feb 1, 1987). He argues for a work reform where the public sector becomes responsible for the distribution of work and the private sector remains responsible for distributing goods and services. Whatever the future holds, many people agree that work and leisure roles will change. It is time educators consider the student's total preparation for adult roles and not limit the education to the narrow domains of either employment or academics.

## SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERVENTION

Measuring satisfaction with the intervention provided another way to evaluate the transition project. Satisfaction surveys were administered to teachers, students, and guardians. The survey asked all parties to evaluate changes in attitudes and job search behaviors. Parents and teachers commented upon observations, while students gave opinions about skills they learned. The survey presented the reader with ten statements about satisfaction and a force-choice rating scale from #1 to #4. Marking a #3 or #4 indicated agreement to strong agreement with the survey statement. In all cases respondents marked either a 3 or 4 level in all categories. A summary of the highest rated statements, where 90% of the responses were rated a #4 is tabulated in Table 21. Surprisingly, the leisure/job search students rated six items in the highest level of satisfaction (#4) while the pure job search class listed 3.

| **SURVEY OF SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERVENTION**<br>**Indicating the top 3 areas of satisfaction or perceived benefits of the class** |
|---|
| **STUDENTS' RESPONSE** |
| ✓ I increased my sense of confidence. |
| ✓ I increased my ability to organize my job search effort. |
| ✓ I increased mastery of specific job search skills like interviewing and networking. |
| **GUARDIANS' RESPONSE** |
| ✓ The student increased his/her confidence. |
| ✓ The student increased his/her job search effort and ability. |
| ✓ I would recommend the class to others. |
| **TEACHERS' RESPONSE** |
| ***About team teaching with a graduate student*** |
| ✓ I learned new techniques from team teaching with the graduate student |
| ✓ The extra person helped in providing hands-on experiences |
| ✓ They tended to adapt the lessons more often. |
| ***About high school student growth*** |
| ✓ Students learned new job search skills not previously known. |
| ✓ Students increased their job search efforts as a result of the class. |
| ✓ Students improved in self-confidence or showed increased maturity. |
| ✓ Students seemed to enjoy the class. |
| *Table 21* |

**Implications For Replication and Continuation**

The project attempted to spread the training around the Portland area with some schools as far away as 40 miles. This resulted in working with 17 different schools over five semesters.[27] Teachers were generally allowed to participate for two semesters. An indirect measure of teacher satisfaction can be inferred by the number of times a teacher chose to participate with the project more than once. A total of 13 teachers had the opportunity to participate more than once and 62% chose to collaborate directly with the project for a second semester. Three teachers signed up through all 3 years of project, but this option was limited in order to disseminate the techniques. One teacher decided not to participate or offer the intervention at the end of her first semester. Ten teachers, or 77%, reported that they would continue or are continuing to offer their students some form of job search training. It appears that the intervention has a better than 50% chance of enduring in over half of the sites after the project funding ends.

These levels of satisfaction and continuation imply that replication if on-going and feasible. While team teaching proved to be an effective way to initiate a new program in high school settings, classroom teachers did not appear to be dependent upon team teaching with the graduate students. For example most of the teachers disagreed with the statement, "I feel I would probably not have taught this course without the team teaching support." This makes future replication more feasible for other districts which cannot provide much support or training.

**INTERPRETATION OF SATISFACTION WITH THE INTERVENTION**

It is interesting to note that the major goal of the curriculum is to teach job search skills. Yet parents, teachers and students seem to agree that it also becomes a vehicle for improving self-esteem or self-confidence. This has been found to be true in other surveys conducted on previous job club projects by Kimeldorf. In addition, the students in the combined job and leisure search class expressed the highest rate of satisfaction. This supports the notion that by providing either a work or leisure search training option the intervention can appeal to most of our students.

27 On two occasions a graduate student agreed to teach at two schools at once.

# IN CONCLUSION

The numbers line up in neat little columns and time washes over them. The numbers can mollify unless we step back and simply realize that the numbers spell success. The numbers show that educators can make a difference. While we may not all agree on the best way to interpret or evaluate all of the data, we can agree that more students found employment at the end of training than a group of similar students without the training. In fact, the unemployment rate of the students was reduced by almost 50%!

The need for more training in this area is clear. Richard Lathrop and others have estimated that very few people get a job search education (1974). Many experts believe that less than 5% of those looking for work have received job search training (Farr.1988). Job clubs and job search training cannot correct a labor market malfunction, nor bail out a community where the major employer has left town. However, self-directed job search programs can help reduce frictional unemployment. This is the number of people who are unemployed because they cannot find an employer who is currently looking for employees with their skills. One estimate suggests that frictional unemployment may be reduced by as much as 41% with a job club type intervention (Farr. 1988). Structural unemployment resulting from major shifts in the economy will always have to be addressed through legislative bodies grappling with economic and political realities.

The project demonstrates that students can learn to become more competent job seekers when given a competent curriculum and committed staff. The success of this project is the result of the efforts of the classroom teachers willing to take a chance on a new subject and the students willing to take the risk of phoning and visiting an employer. Hopefully, the students' work and leisure horizons have been expanded.

There is no final prescription, but there is a final dream. This dream pictures communities all over the country offering multiple forms of job search training and assistance.[28] Those who are ready to pursue work in high school could be able to enroll in a semester-long course. Those who need support later could enroll in a community college job search center. Local community agencies like the YWCA and YMCA, Parks and Recreation Department, and Private Industry Councils collaborate to provide both work and leisure classes for all its citizens, young and old.

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28 Dreams sometimes come close to being true. In Washington state the 1988 legislature is considering House Bill IH-3691 which would provide funding for job search training to all young people currently being served in juvenile rehabilitation facilities. Martin Kimeldorf began his first in-school job club in 1982 at Maple Lane which serves incarcerated youth. The continued efforts at Maple Lane became one of the main examples cited by the advocates of this bill.

In this ideal future, an unemployed person could always join a support group and unemployment would no longer be a silent stigma, endured in isolation. Career change would be done in a supportive, community atmosphere, and these studies would no longer need to be conducted.

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McDaniels, Carl. "The Work Leisure Connection".*The Vocational Guidance Quarterly*. Sept 1984. This is an outstanding article. McDaniels originally coined the term work-leisure connection.

Wegmann, Robert, et. al. *Looking For Work In The New Economy*. Olympus Publishing. Salt Lake City, Utah. 1985.

*OTHER PROJECT FINDINGS (not commercially published as of 1988)*

The Job Club Project. Preliminary data Tables 1-4. Sent by Angella Patten. Brian Cobb, Director. University of Vermont, Special Education Department, 405 Waterman Building, Prospect St., Burlington, Vermont 05405.

Special Education Students in Transition: Washington State Data 1976-1986. Vol. 2. Eugene Edgar and Phyllis Levine. February, 1987. Experimental Education Unit, WJ-10, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

# BOOKS USED IN THE PSU PROJECT

**Written By Martin Kimeldorf**

**Job Search Education**
Educational Design Inc. 47 W. 13th NYC, NY 10011.

This is a full-fledged job search student workbook and instructor guide. The comprehensive guide has many suggestions for setting up a job club. The guide is loaded with tips showing how to set up a self-help, job search group. The program emphasizes networking skills, intensive interview preparation, direct contact with employers, telemarketing methods, and structured job hunting goals.

**Pathways To Work**
Meridian Educational Corp, 205 E. Locust St, Bloomington IL. 61701. 1988.

This book teaches many of the skills found in *Job Search Education* but in a shorter format, with greater variety, and at a higher reading level. It is designed to be used with *Pathways To Leisure* in the same semester. A leisure search is easier to master and uses the same skills found in a job search.

**Pathways To Leisure**
Meridian Educational Corp, 205 E. Locust St, Bloomington IL. 61701. 1988.

This book is designed to be used in conjunction with *Pathways To Work* . It teaches students how to identify their leisure interests and then how to find opportunities that match their leisure interests. This innovative program reuses the job search skills of networking, phone surveying, and goal setting to help students achieve a well-rounded set of life-career goals. (Note: other professionals in Home Economics, Drug Abuse, Leisure, and Health Education have used it to supplement their existing courses).

**Write Into A Job**
Meridian Educational Corp, 205 E. Locust St, Bloomington IL. 61701. (in press).

This program combines the best of the "natural writing process" in the production of resumes and resume alternatives. Resume alternatives (cards, posters, skill listings) are simpler to write and use. This book nicely blends vocational and academic instruction. Excellent as a supplement to survival and study skills classes. Over 30 sample resumes for entry level jobs are included!

**Talents**
(Being field tested, write to Kimeldorf for publication information).

This career exploration book is written for the younger audience in the 7th to 10th grades. The book helps young people identify their talents. Then it guides them in locating local resources and opportunities where their talents can be put to use. Three avenues of opportunity are explored: local employment, volunteer work, and setting up a neighborhood business. Talents is also suited for rural programs and older students with limited skills.

## OTHER WORKS OF INTEREST

These have been used as resources for work and leisure.

### Help Wanted

Available from the author at Search Press, 6705 Gold Creek Dr SW, Tumwater, WA 98502

*Help Wanted* is a play about the unemployment blues. Winner of three regional playwriting contests in all three West Coast states (1982-1984).

### Teaching Is Dramatic

Ednick Communications Inc. P.O. Box 3612, Portland OR 97208.

This book contains lots of ideas for creative, dramatic group-activities called *theater games*. Additional methods and materials will be found on the subjects of improvisation, skit work, and beginning script writing. This material will add spice to tired lessons. The exercises are good group warm-ups and just plain fun.

### Special Needs In Technology Education

Davis Publications. Worcester, MA. 01608.

The first book to fully explore practical ways to mainstream special needs students in industrial arts. Lots of how-to's, illustrations, plans, ideas.

### Educator's Job Search

Ednick Communications Inc. P.O. Box 3612, Portland OR 97208.

A guide to help teachers find work. This can become an excellent vehicle for raising teachers' awareness of self-directed job search behaviors. The same process used all of the Kimeldorf job search books in this book targeted at teachers. As a result, instructors can picture the process in terms that may be personally or professionally relevant.

### Gourmet Teaching

Ednick Communications Inc. P.O. Box 3612, Portland OR 97208.

A collection of essays by Martin Kimeldorf. This is a book of spicey educational recipes for the 21st Century. It covers both concepts and specific techniques. The esssays cover topics ranging from junior high school curriculums, alternative eduction, talented and gifted education, work and leisure integration, resume writing techniques, new concepts for career centers, the myths and realities of high tech. Many of the essays delve more deeply into subjects raised in *Numbers That Spell Success*.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### INTEGRATING LEISURE AND WORK

*The Three Boxes Of Life*. Richard N. Bolles.Ten Speed Press, Box 7123, Berkeley, CA 94707.

An in-depth treatment of how to achieve balance as a lifelong learner, worker, and leisure-er. A must book. It has lots of suggestions and clarifying exercises. Lots of resources and books suggested for further investigation.

*Leisure Wellness*. C. Forrest McDowell.Sun Moon Press. P.O. Box 1516, Eugene, OR 97403.

One of the most provocative treatments of the topic of leisure. Dr. McDowell is a visionary who leads you into the most innovative issues of contemporary leisure. Lots of exercises and references.

*Leisure: Integrating A Neglected Component In Life Planning*. Carl McDaniels. The National Center for Research in Vocational Education. National Center Publications. Box U. 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, Ohio.43210.

This innovative work discusses the life-cycle changes in leisure from birth to retirement. Also see "The Work/Leisure Connection" published in the September 1984 issue of The Vocational Guidance Quarterly.

### LEISURE: CURRICULUMS AND RESOURCES

*Free Time Fun*. Gary Huff and Virginia Tyler. Ednick Communications Inc. P.O. Box 3612, Portland OR 97208.

About low cost activities for developmentally disabled young adults and helpers. Lots of creative ideas for leisure with advice on social skills, appropriate community behaviors and transportation issues.

*Leisure Education For The Handicapped. Curriculum Goals, Activities, and Resources*. Bender, Michael; Brannan, Steve; Verhoven, Peter. College Hill Press. 4284 41st St, San Diego, CA. 1985.

This book illustrates how leisure objectives and experiences can be incorporated into elementary special ed programs. The activities have been used in recreational, camp, and secondary settings as well.

*TRENDS Leisure Assessment System (TLAS)*. Kathleen J. Halberg and Roy Olsson. Institute of Recreation Research and Service. 180 Esslinger Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403.

This software helps people assess their leisure interests in 3 sections: Personal Information, Functional Information, and Leisure Information. Adult through child versions are available. (Designed for the Apple II).

*Leisure In Your Life*. Geoffrey Godbey. Venture Publishing. State College, PA.1985.

An excellent text for college students with lots of background on the various ways of viewing leisure.

### JOB FINDING: CURRICULUMS AND RESOURCES

*What Color Is Your Parachute*. Richard Bolles. Ten Speed Press. Berkeley, CA. 1986+

Updated every year. This best selling book is an excellent overall resource for ideas, books, and exercises.

*The Work Book*. J. Michael Farr; Gaither, Richard; Pickrell, J. McKnight. Bloomington, IL.1983. Write to JIST below for the book. See also the new book by Mike Farr, *Job Finding Fast*, and *The First Step* by Richard Gaither.

One of the original workbooks using job club finding techniques. The catalog put out by the authors on job finding materials is excellent. Write JIST, 150 E. 14th St, Indianapolis, IN 46202 and ask for the catalog.

*Career Book*. Joyce Lain Kennedy. 1988. VGM Publications.

One of the most original resources available. This book is designed for families of students in the ages of 15-21. The book covers trends, occupational outlooks, career decision making, how to get into college and be successful, job finding, and how to succeed on a career.

## JOB FINDING: GENERAL METHODS AND THEORY BOOKS

*The Job Club Counselor's Manual*. Azrin, N.A.; Besalel, Victoria. University Park Press. 1980.

This is the original methods book for creating support groups for job seekers.

*Looking For Work In The New Economy*. Robert Wegmann, Robert Chapman, Miriam Johnson. Olympus Publishing Company. Salt Lake City, Utah. 1985.

Written by America's premier scholars of job finding. Many studies, trends and suggestions cited.

*National Career Education Leaders' Communication Network*. Write Ken Hoyt, Editor. Kansas State University, College of Education, Bluemont Hall, Manhattan, Kansas 66506.

This is an excellent source of progressive and innovative programs, people, and materials. Subscription is currently free.

## Addendum For
## *Numbers That Spell Success*

The transition project summarized in this book involved very detailed examinations of job and leisure search behavior. Over 300+ variables for each student were summarized and analyzed. In the process a few errors or omissions occurred in printing. Also, by being very close to the data, one can occassionally take for granted certain prerequisite information; what is clear to the person collating and displaying the data can at times be unclear to others. Hopefully this *Addendum* will clear up any questions you may have.

### WHY SOME PERCENTS DID NOT ADD UP TO 100%

There are two reasons why some number groups did not add up to 100%. These reasons are summarized below.

#### Rounding Off Percents

The data in the computer printed out final data to two decimal places. However, it was felt that this degree of accuracy would be an over-statement. Therefore, all percents were rounded off to the nearest integer. For this reason the total percent for a comparable group may add up to slightly more or less than 100% (97-102%).

#### Multiple Responses Are Not Comparable But Sometimes Displayed Together

Sometimes respondents were allowed to indicate more than one response. For example, in the questionnaire about how students found jobs, students could list several different techniques. This was consistent with the fact that successful job seekers use more than one method. Likewise, in the following chart parents were asked to indicate how they helped the student. The percents for method of help used by a parent indicates the percentage of positive responses for a given technique.

Therefore, when respondents had an opportunity to make multiple responses the data does not always be add up to 100%. The percentages simply indicate how often people gave a particular positive response to the question.This issue applies to the following tables:

*Table 4, Group: Work experience.*

| | |
|---|---|
| WORK EXPERIENCE | PREVIOUS Employment *In* Their Neighborhood .....73% |
| | PREVIOUS Employment *outside* The Neighborhood .....50% |
| | CURRENTLY Employed .....14% |

There are three possible experiences students could indicate and logically a student could have more than one kind of work experience. Viewing each percentage as a separate category will be helpful.

*Table 8—How Parents Help Students During The Job Search*

Parents could indicate yes or a positive reply to any of the methods in Table 8. Therefore, each response is not comparable. The percentages can be used to compare the relative strengths of each method.

| HOW PARENTS HELP STUDENTS DURING THE JOB SEARCH | |
|---|---|
| Job Search Area | Percent Who Said They Helped |
| Help complete a job application | 73 % |
| Provide Transportation | 62 % |
| Network with friends for leads | 51 % |
| Buy clothes | 38 % |
| etc.... | |

*Table 8*

**Minor Percentages Were Deleted**
In summarizing the major findings, minor percentages were deleted. This is another reason why some percentages may not add up to 100%. The following example illustrates this.

Sometimes the data was spread out across several categories for one group of students while bunched together for other groups. To make the data more comparable and readable two methods were used. First, data was regrouped into larger units that captured at least 65% of the data. Secondly, minor clusters of data were deleted. This principle is illustrated below showing how raw data from a fictional finding could be regrouped into major components.

RAW DATA

| | Item A | Item B | Item C | Item D | Item E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1 | 41% | 45% | 8% | 3% | 3% |
| Group 2 | 25% | 65% | 8% | -- | 2% |

DATA REGROUPED FOR EASE OF COMPARISON AND DISPLAY

| | Item A | Item B | Items C-D |
|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1 | 41% | 45% | 11% |
| Group 2 | 25% | 65% | 8% |

Again, the purpose is to make items more comparable and readable without disrupting the major patterns of distribution. Specific cases where this was done are pointed out next.

In Table 3 we did not indicate the percentage of students enrolled in more than 3 periods of special education because approximately 85% were enrolled for 3 periods or less. Likewise, in the handicapped condition a small percentage of these students were labelled as behaviorally disordered or "other handicapping condition" but it was less than 4% and subsequently not included.

| SPECIAL EDUCATION STATUS | | |
|---|---|---|
| PERIODS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION (Separate groupings due do significant differences)* | Control Group* ..... 1 Period .....55% 2-3 .....27% | Intervention Group* 1.....38% 2-3.....46% |
| HANDICAPPING CONDITION | Learning Disabled .....82% Mentally Retarded or Behaviorally Disordered .....15% | |

*Table 3*

As a result of seeking readability and comparability, some charts may not display 100% of the data collected, but will display the most significant data from the 300 variables collected. This applies particularly to Tables 1-4.

## CORRECTIONS

There were also some printing errors for data. In this instance the data printed was incorrect. The following corrections apply.

### Table 2 Misprints

The original chart including attendance data for Table 2 was misprinted as:

| AGE, GENDER, RACE, ATTENDANCE BACKGROUND | |
|---|---|
| ATTENDANCE: NUMBER OF DAYS MISSED IN PREVIOUS YEAR. | 1-10 Days .....**50 %** 11-23.....**47 %** 23+ days.....**16 %** |

*Table 2*

### Table 2 Corrections

Table 1 data for attendance should have read

| | |
|---|---|
| ATTENDANCE: NUMBER OF DAYS MISSED IN PREVIOUS YEAR. | 1-10 Days .....**54 %** 11-23.....**33 %** 23+ days.....**13 %** |

*CORRECTED Table 2*

**Table 20 Misprints**

Table 20 in two parts were misprinted as follows in the groups for *Awareness of Leisure Resources* and *Desire To Change My Leisure*. The original charts included the following misprinted data (indicated in bold typeface numbers).

| SUMMARY OF LEISURE ATTITUDE SURVEY | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Pre-Test, Control** | **Post-Test, Intervention** |
| **Awareness of Leisure Resources** | | |
| MONEY SPENT IN LEISURE: How much do you spend on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | **14 %** |
| $25-$45 | 17% | **0 %** |
| $1-$25 | 63% | **100 %** |
| TIME SPENT IN LEISURE: How many hours do you spend each week on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | **14%** |
| 21-40 hours | 27% | **0%** |
| 1-21 hours | 53% | **86%** |

and

| **Desire To Change My Leisure** | | |
|---|---|---|
| No change, I am satisfied with my leisure. | 36 % | **29 %** |
| I want more ideas of what to do. | 27 % | **14 %** |
| I want more leisure time. | 18 % | **29 %** |
| I don't know what I would do differently. | 15 % | **0 %** |

*Table 20*

**Table 20 corrections**

Corrections for the two charts in Table 20 are shown below:

| **Awareness of Leisure Resources** | | |
|---|---|---|
| MONEY SPENT IN LEISURE: How much do you spend on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | **13 %** |
| $25-$45 | 17% | **0 %** |
| $1-$25 | 63% | **88 %** |
| TIME SPENT IN LEISURE: How many hours do you spend each week on leisure? | | |
| I don't know | 20% | **13 %** |
| 21-40 hours | 27% | **0 %** |
| 1-21 hours | 53% | **88 %** |

*CORRECTED Table 20*

*and*

| **Desire To Change My Leisure** | | |
|---|---|---|
| No change, I am satisfied with my leisure. | 36 % | **25 %** |
| I want more ideas of what to do. | 27 % | **25 %** |
| I want more leisure time. | 18 % | **38 %** |
| I don't know what I would do differently. | 15 % | **13 %** |

*CORRECTED Table 20*

## LATE BREAKING NEWS

As *Numbers That Spell Success* went to press some more good news about the effectiveness of job search training programs was released. The news came from the state of Washington in the BEST program which served youth offenders attending a state institution high school called Maple Lane High School. As a result of the success of this program, legislation was introduced by Representative Barbara Holms securing funding for expanding the BEST program to all schools serving youthful offenders.

The BEST program was coordinated by Marcia Lynch. She used *Job Search Education* curriculums to teaching job finding skills. As students were released from Maple Lane to group homes Marcia then continued the effort by working with group home staff and community members to insure that the job search skills would be applied locally upon release. The results of this effort were impressive. As reported by Barbara Holms in her Spring 1988 newsletter, 97 students were trained in the BEST program and 57 students now hold full or part-time jobs and 21 are attending school or training programs. Only 8 of the participants had reoffended, which translates into an 8% rate. This compares favorably with the average rate of reoffending placed at 65%. The cost of training the students augmented by JTPA funding sources was $50,000 as compared to the cost of incarcerating one child for one year at $44,000. For more information about this program contact Jack Blain, principal, Maple Lane School, 20311 Old Highway 9 SW, Centralia, WA 98531.

## About The Vocational Careers Program

In 1973, Jean Edwards successfully created a unique partnership between the Portland State University Special Education Department and the U.S. National Bank of Oregon which provided the first funding for a year-round demonstration and training project researched through a faculty seed-grant. This project came to serve both severely and moderately disabled youth. Out of this effort, different models for community integration and job placement were field tested and refined under a variety of research grants between 1975-1984. The initial support of U.S. National Bank encouraged other private sector funding of the project. Eventually, regional and national research-and-demonstration grants along with support from Tektronix and the Oregon Community Foundation helped Jean Edwards realize her program vision: proving that all citizens with disabilities can be prepared to lead independent lives of self-sufficiency, in the most normal environment with appropriate training and support. The "best practices" which she developed and incorporated into training models have been variously called *work experience, transition preparation, supported work,* and *integration supports*. In 1985 Edwards received a grant to expand this preparation and vision for mildly handicapped students in the form of field testing a job club model adapted for schools.

One of her former students, Martin Kimeldorf, was invited to set up a school-based job club model which not only taught job finding skills but also the re-use of the same search skills in the exploration of leisure opportunities. Integrating work and leisure is an important concept but is little-researched. The integration theme becomes increasingly important as we enter a world of uncertain economic and social futures. Kimeldorf's research began in 1985 and, like all of the other Vocational Careers research programs, used a partnership model to field and turn theory into practice. **Mildly handicapped high school students following a curriculum set up by Kimeldorf and carried out by local Portland area secondary teachers found employment at much higher rates than students receiving typical programing options.** Data was collected from families, job search competency tests, surveys of student's expectations, and school records. *Numbers That Spell Success* not only summarizes the findings in the Portland area, but it also ties the Portland State University research to the latest research in special education, labor market studies, and observations by leading sociologists. It makes concrete suggestions for improving school programing for mildly handicapped students and these suggestions will prove useful to many other learners as well.

## About The Authors

Jean Edwards and Martin Kimeldorf have been actively researching, teaching, writing and leading workshops in the field of life-skills preparation for secondary youth for many years.

***Jean Edwards***, a Professor of Special Education at Portland State University, is internationally recognized not only in the vocational area but also for her contributions to the disciplines of the social/sexual training of those with retardation, child abuse, self-esteem building, and Downs Syndrome. She has received many honors and much recognition but none please her more than to have helped founding a center (later named in her honor) providing innovative training and placement of persons with severe handicaps into normal community living and work environments.

***Martin Kimeldorf*** is a researcher and author who has written several books on job finding, volunteer work, and leisure. He has practical experience as a high school Industrial Arts and Special Education teacher, university instructor, and editor/writer for various professional organizations (AVA, NAVESNP, Adult and Career Development Network). Martin is also a playwright and has won ten regional and national playwriting contests to date. He was selected Teacher Of The Year in 1985 by the Washington Association Vocational Educators Special Needs Personnel.